

# Mexican Life

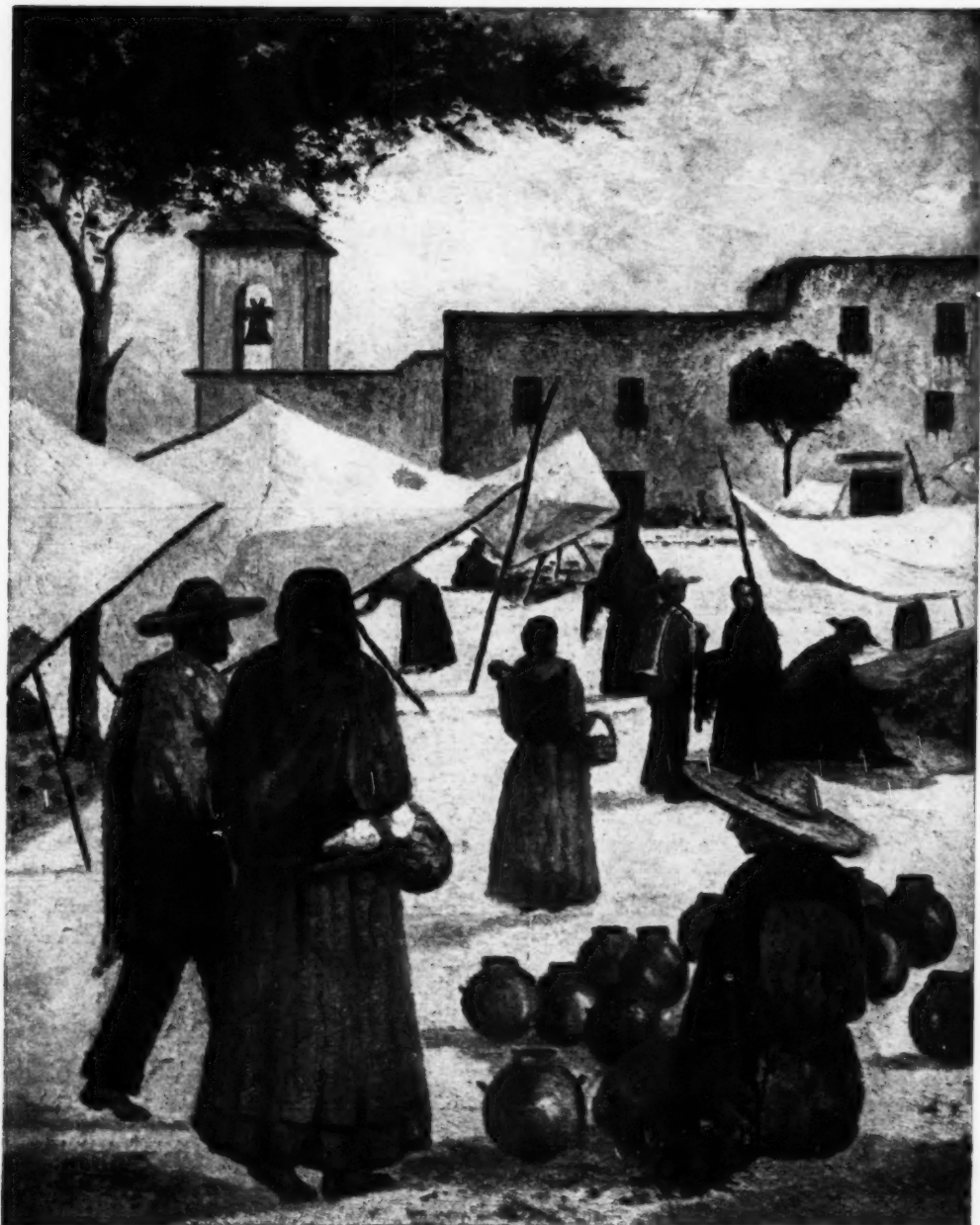
*Mexico's Monthly Review*

FOUNDED IN 1924

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MARCH, 1951

No. 3, Vol. XXVII



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## Mexican Life

Mexico's Monthly Review

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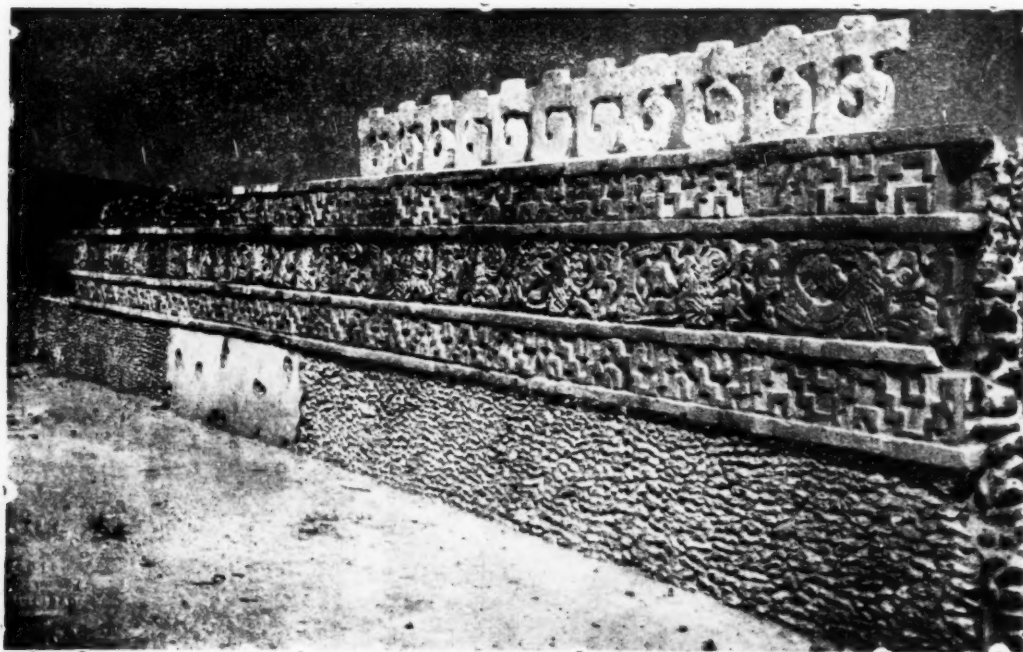
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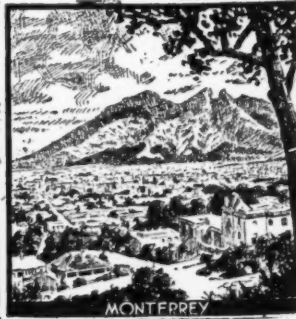
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# Mexican Life

Uruguay No. 3 Mexico City

Telephone: 12-59-78

Published on the first day of every month

Registrado como Artículo de 2a Clase el 22 de Octubre de 1927

Number 3 Volume XXVII

March 1st. 1951

HOWARD S. PHILLIPS

EDITOR

## The Problem of Too Much Money

**U**NDER the normal free play of competition the level of prices is determined by supply and demand; that is to say, when the supply exceeds the demand prices tend to drop, or, vice versa, when the demand exceeds the supply prices tend to rise. The volume of demand, on the other hand, is determined by the purchasing capacity of the population or the amount of money it has at its disposal. When the supply of money rises above its normal level, or, in other words, when the medium of exchange exceeds the supply of available goods, prices go up.

This has been the major contributing factor in the process of price inflation which has affected Mexico's economy throughout the foregoing decade, reaching its acutest stage during recent months. The excess of money in circulation has created a seller's market and the consequent rise in prices which covers all prime necessities of livelihood. Such excess of money, however, has not been due in more recent times to increased national productiveness or to the growing wealth of the population. It has developed largely through the great influx of dollars from the United States—refugee or repatriate money in flight from high taxation—since the beginning of war in Korea.

While this precipitated influx has served to eliminate with dramatic suddenness the former problem of dollar shortage resulting from an unfavorable foreign trade balance, it has created the new problem of excessive currency circulation which has accelerated inflation.

Mexico must therefore find a solution of the problem created by too much money—that is, to encounter the means of preventing its use for speculation, hoarding or monopoly, or serving as an instrument of price inflation, and of channeling its flow into productive enterprise. The problem, in fact, is not that of too much money—for Mexico needs capital for the development of its natural resources, its agriculture and industries—but of finding for it a productive field of investment, of employing it for the veritable enhancement of national wealth.

The Ministry of Treasury, brilliantly headed by Lic. Ramón Beteta, having successfully coped with the grave financial problems Mexico has confronted in recent years, is facing the present problem with similar decision and foresight. In its resolve to fight inflation on all fronts, the Mexican Government has assumed emergency prerogatives that will enable it to exercise control over prices, production, profits and bank credits.

In assuming these sweeping powers, the government pursues not only the immediate aim to reduce the volume of currency in circulation but also a long range aim to create an effective and permanent means of controlling the fluctuations in its purchasing value. Adhering to the view that the present monetary excess is a transient phenomenon and that with proper supervision it can be changed from a detriment to a benefit, the government is following a policy whereby

the incoming capital may be permanently preserved in Mexico. For this reason it has not resorted to revaluation of the peso in its rate of exchange.

The aim of the government is to prevent the outflow of this surplus capital by providing for it opportunities for safe and profitable investment. With this purpose the Ministry of Treasury has created a National Savings Plan which offers bonds at seven percent interest rates, whose proceeds will go to finance new industries. In addition to this, the government financing institution, Nacional Financiera, is issuing bonds with a six percent interest, whose proceeds are financing government projects and industrial enterprises.

On the other hand, by "freezing" new bank deposits the Bank of Mexico (the country's central bank of issue) is limiting the credit operations of all such private banks whose deposits total ten times the value of their capital.

The greater part of the reserves held by the Bank of Mexico is being converted into gold which is freely sold to the public. At least sixty million pesos in silver coins of various denominations is being turned out monthly by the Mint, a large part of which is withdrawn from circulation through hoarding.

Through the Secretariat of Economy the government is creating a rigid control of wholesale and retail prices—fixing them at levels which prevailed at the end of last year—which affect such basic food products as meats, corn, wheat, beans, potatoes, cooking fats, milk, vegetables, coffee, sugar and rice.

Price controls are to be also exercised over cotton textiles, leather used in production of footwear, wool, coal, copper, sulphur, lumber, rubber, nylon, industrial alcohol, iron, steel, cement, petroleum lubricants, medicines, and low priced motor trucks and automobiles.

The government intends to apply its control over all industrial and commercial enterprises engaged in the production and distribution of foodstuffs, clothing, raw materials that are essential to national industries, and goods produced by the major branches of national industry, determining ceiling wholesale and retail prices on the basis of reasonable profit rates. Any increase in price will be possible only with specific official authority.

These are the salient points of the program whereby the government intends to curb the process of inflation which in the course of the last ten years has reduced the peso to one fourth of its former purchasing value. In imposing these sweeping regulations upon private enterprise the Mexican Government is not creating a precedent. It is following the effective examples set by other countries under democratic rule, where the free play of private initiative, which represents a minority, had been curtailed by government supervision so as to serve the interests of the majority.

# Morelia

By Henry Albert Phillips

**O**F all Mexican towns and cities, I found Morelia the most purely colonial in character, which nonparadoxically means it was also the most Spanish. Surely no other city in the Republic offers such a rich architectural vista as one entered from the direction of Mexico City: the two tall stately towers of perhaps the finest cathedral in Mexico, the bells visible through the chiseled apertures, the azulejo tiled dome in the background, flanked on either side by lovely plazas with their lush growth of tropical trees and flowers; to the right another ancient tower and a plateresque facade. We drove for a mile down a parked street, flanked with baroque palaces, some dating from and bringing home the viceregal period; palm trees planted in the grassy center and five-globed decorative lamp-posts adding a Continental touch. Continuing on, past the one-time Seminario opposite the cathedral with its quaint turrets, we were almost brushed by the foliage cascading outward from the Garden of the Martyrs. It is partially surrounded by portales, the arcades so characteristic of Mexico, and one more lovely though crumbling sixteenth century church. We came at length to the piece de résistance, in my estimation. This was the Calzada de Guadalupe. It was reminiscent of the ramblas of Barcelona; a public promenade floored with huge blocks of stone, with low walls in which stone seats were set at intervals; a Lovers' Lane surrounded by an air of poetic refinement shaded by huge elms and overlooked by a few stately mansions with grilled fences and other more modest family homes. Uneven flagged walks outside the rambla followed the line of the fences and were sometimes entirely interrupted by the trunks of the shade trees. It savored of a by-

gone world and yet preserved almost intact an atmosphere rarely found in these latter days. It was enormously enhanced at either end; in the one case, by the junction with the eighteenth century aqueduct of 254 arches 27 feet high that still brought to the town from the neighboring hills its fresh spring water. The other end of the Calzada melted into a lovely public garden, the Jardín de los Aztecas, a natural park that was a bower of bougainvilleas, with the Bosque de San Pedro, the town pleasure lake, mirroring the scene in the background. After lingering indefinitely amidst these environs, I paid a visit to the neighboring Santuario de Guadalupe. It gave me a little shock with its garish imitation Moorish gilded interior, with one of the most horrible maimed and bloody figures of Christ near the door to gratify the barbaric streak of realism that strangely runs through both Spaniard and Indian. At the far end of this dreamy, bougainvillea-dripping plaza stood the dominating equestrian monument of the great liberator, José María Morelos y Pavón.

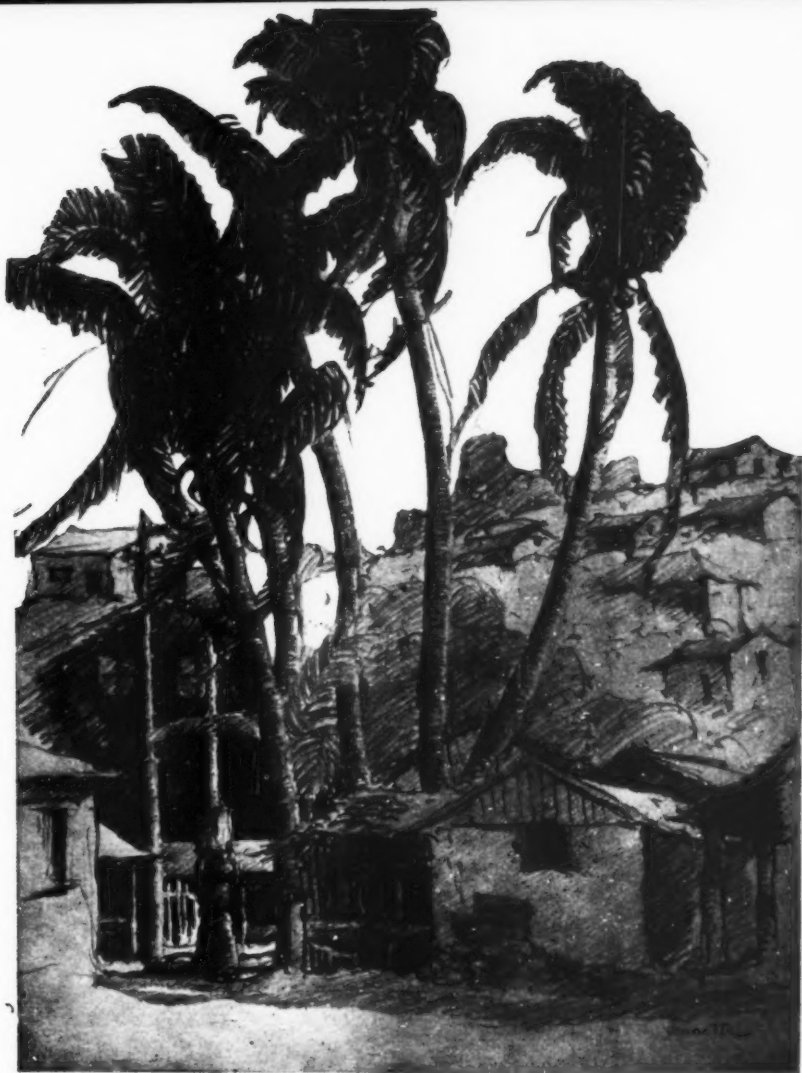
In character with this land of paradox, we are suddenly whisked into an entirely different slant, mood and current of events. Up to now we have been luxuriating in the colonial city of Valladolid, as Morelia was called by the Spaniards up to the time of the Revolution. We have seen it as the most brilliant colonial jewel in the crown of New Spain. But with the introduction of José María Morelos, for whom the city was renamed following his martyrdom, this most Spanish of towns becomes the most anti-Spanish. For a decade it flamed with rebellion and arson, murders and executions. Its palaces and churches were riddled

Continued on page 56



Water Color.

By Charles A. Gilson



Drawing.

By Jeannette.

## Out of Touch With Things

By Robert S. Engelking

**T**HERE is a lonesome place down the coast below Xihuatanejo. A hill stands off into the sea, and for ten or fifteen miles on either side the beach curves out and away to meet the point.

The hill is a tall jut of rock, with green trees and plants growing thick over its top. Down on its sea-base, the rock is clean, red and brown and yellow in color, with the waves smashing against the squared granite surfaces and the water going high up into the air from the blows. Shiny wet crabs run along the walls and slips of the rock, following up and down the rise and fall of the moving water, the water that is blue and green and white in movement.

On top of the hill the wind blows slowly and the green plants rustle with its passing. The birds

come skimming by the top of the rock, with their wings dark against the sky and light against the sea, with their feathers whistling in flight, with their cries thin and wiry against the long stillness. Down below the sea is far-spread and almost still, going out like a floor to the end of the horizon, and the water twists slowly into long swirls that leave pale wash-tracks lying in rounded dreamy forms across the cobalt flatness.

On either side of the rock the beach stretches away, going back to the hills that lie behind. A beach is like a life-line; there is a peculiar, solid satisfaction to the following of its strip. A fascination lies in the surf that rolls up from the sea and comes up onto the land and covers it for a little while and then

goes back again, so that the land and the sea meet in that embroidered line; the fascination comes from the moving waters and from the wet half-lands that lie in the surf. Here is where we came out of the sea and lay around the damp places and breathed the air and the water and felt the mud and looked at the sunshine, and it is a natural place to be.

This beach is smooth and white. Its sand lies clean in the sun and the water and now and then the black husks of coconut shells stick up from the dunes. The waves rise up high, ten or fifteen or twenty feet high, and hang for a moment in a glistening clear wall of water, and inside this pale green slab are all kinds of fish silhouetted against the light thinness and swimming like hell. Then the wave-top gives a little tremble and the whole wall comes smashing down and the spray goes high into the air, sparkling against the sky and the sea, and the foam comes pushing up onto the beach, falling all over itself and twisting in and out as it rises. It smells good, with a salt-fish smell, a smell that mixes in with the wet sand and the hot sleepy sunshine. But when the rains come in at night, on those summer nights when the rains come in, the beach is a sad place to walk. From way over the lightning flickers along the tops of the sierra and the heavy thunder rolls in and out and the big drops of rain come dripping down in the dark. Then the tall warm waves, unseen in the night, strike the beach with a sad unavoidable sound and then they strike again, and the wet night air trembles from the vibration. And the beach stretches out and gets longer and the rain comes down harder and then it is very sad walking all by yourself down the sand, in the dark.

Behind the beach and the tall rock is a spit of land and then the lagoon. The land is flat and covered with brush and trees. When there is rain, the land is green and lush, and when the rains stop, the land turns dry and crumbling and hot under the steady sunshine. The lagoon that it holds is filled with coffee-colored water, sweet to taste, that lies still with no ripples on its top. All around the edges of the lagoon thick bushes grow out of the water, bushes with lean, smooth mudsucking roots that go straight down, through the air and through the water and down into the bottom mud. In the spaces between the bushes where the sun shines down, and where no-one can see, the alligators crawl up onto the mud bank and turn around and lie down in the warm slime to rest. At night the fish jump out of the water and fall back again making a sudden splash in the dark. In the wintertime the geese and cranes and long necked ducks and garzas and the other birds come flying in and sit in the branches over the black water and call to each other and rustle feathers and spread their wings out to dry in the sunshine.

Beyond the inside edge of the lagoon, the land turns up into the mountains, high mountains that run along the coast, saw-toothed mountains that climb higher and higher as they fall back from the sea. Up along the tops, there are small white-tailed deer no bigger than a small sheep; there are parrots, green and screeching, and all sorts of creatures.

But down back of the tall rock, between the beach and the lagoon, was the town. It was a small town; there were only nine or ten houses in all. The houses were made of mud and wattles, with dirt floors that were beaten down, tight smooth, with high straw thatched roofs up over them to keep them cool. Their framework was of wooden poles lashed together with vines and creepers; the rafters inside were black with smoke from the cooking fires. On the outside the wattles and straw had turned dry and light-grey and brittle from the sun and wind, and the clay pots and

clothes were hanging out along the thatch to dry. From the inside of the houses came a pleasant sweetish smell of people, mixed in with smells of cooking and fish and woodsmoke and grease. In the dark of the inside the fires glowed red, with each coal showing by itself.

Big clay pots filled to the top with water stood close to the wall. Pieces of meat and sides of fish were hung off the roof poles to dry and to smoke. Frijoles cooked on the fires and chickens and pigs and cats and dogs wandered in and through the houses. Outside the ground was worn smooth where the animals and the people had walked around and sat down and moved about; the dust turned thick and soft there in the dry months. Back of the houses there were patches of corn and banana, with brush fences holding them in, away from the stock.

At the base of the hill, where the beach bent in and back, the sway made a cove where the high water was broken and where the canoes could put in and out. The big dugouts were dragged up clear on the clean sand; they lay there all ready, their noses pointed out to sea with palm log rollers under them, set to roll them down to the water.

Over on the other side of the houses, a hundred yards or so away, was a landing for the lagoon boats. Here there was no clean sand but only logs and smooth mud to push away from. Here the dugouts were smaller and shallower, not sea-going, and little boys were always hanging around looking at the canoes and fooling with the paddles and swimming in the water. They would yell and splash and duck each other and their naked little tails would bob up and down in the water and they did not mind the mud at all.

There were about a hundred people living here in all, about nine or ten families. Everybody had a good time. They were tall, thin, kinky haired people, made for fishing, and their blood was negro and Indian and Spaniard, mostly negro. Among them there was no money to speak of. No-one bought anything and everyone lived very simply, without worrying too much over non-essentials.

When a baby was born the old women would come over and midwife and then the baby would be wrapped up in a clean piece of cloth and nursed, and in a few months he would be eating fish and rice and frijoles like everybody else. He would crawl around on the mud floor of his house and then across into the dusty sunshine of the ground outside and his knees and hands would be dirty and chubby. As he got older he would stop sleeping with his mother and start sleeping with his brothers and then he would go swimming in the lagoon and then he would get bigger and go out fishing with the men and start drinking charanda and wearing pants. Then he would get a woman and take her up the coast to marry her, if they felt like going to the trouble, and they would come back and have a few babies. All of them would live in one of the houses—along with his or her brothers and sisters and aunts and other relatives—and life would go on very smoothly for the most part. Then he would get his own boat and do his own fishing and become independent. In the nights he would sleep in his shirt, with his wife sleeping next to him and holding on to him, both of them lying on a mat on the ground with the warm night wind going over them and resting them.

In the daytime he would work a little bit and talk to the other boys and rest and smoke little cigars and fish and lie in his hammock when the sun got hot. If he was lucky and stayed alive, away from arguments, he lived to be an old man with white hair and black skin; he would sit out in the sun and walk

Continued on page 62



Drawing.

By Arthur Zaidenberg.

# We the Poor (and You Only You)

By Herbert Joseph Mangham

I started north nursing a mild murder impulse. My six-month Mexican tourist permit was expiring, and the only way to prolong one's stay under the present law is to cross the border and reenter on a new one.

Then there was my finances. A check I had put through three weeks before had not yet been collected. Another I expected had not arrived. So I had 400 pesos to pay for the rather extensive trip I had mapped out. (At the current rate a peso is worth 11.5 cents; one cent American equals 8.65 centavos.) I could have borrowed but after living down here awhile, if one doesn't go native and borrow right and left, one gets a psychopathic horror of the whole business.

To add that polishing Latin touch, the village tailor to whom I had given my traveling suit for minor repairs three weeks before hadn't even pressed it. So I had to go to Mexico City looking like a tramp.

I did not want to give up the stopovers I had planned, so, I decided, if I was poor, I would travel like the poor. I would use second class buses; they are cramped and crowded, but they make their destinations on schedule. I would stop in *casas de huéspedes*, which are a cross between a cheap hotel and a rooming house. I would eat in cheap restaurants and the markets; this requires caution and a traveler's eye, because indifference and a fearsome catalog of diseases dwell with the tropical poor.

My bus seat was at the rear but on the aisle, so it was my seat companion who had to sit with his feet high on the wheel cases. The first hours passed in a sort of perverse pleasanee.

My mood became less gory as we snaked into that winding valley wherein lies Tamazunchale; I have been through that verdant spot often, and it never fails to soothe and lift me. And then I began to notice the mention on all sides of the "Licenciado."

This young lawyer going home to Victoria, who sat in the rear seat, was athletic and blondly handsome. His energy and humor were inexhaustible. He knew all the songs. Now I could learn "Tu Solo Tu" (You Only You), which came out in a picture called "Pueblerina," one of the half dozen of the 119 movies made in Mexico last year that an intelligent person could endure. The producers evidently did not anticipate "Tu's" popularity, for the principals sing it once briefly and no more; but it had immediately obsessed the juke boxes, the radio, and the singing public, which includes practically every Mexican that isn't a deaf mute. The producers hastily made up for their lack of foresight by tossing together a sticky mess of film titled "Tu Solo Tu." But the tricky melody, that stopped when you expected it to go on and went up when you expected it to go down and vice versa, eluded me. I could conquer it only by learning the words that it fitted so neatly.

Every seat had a folding seat attached that let down into the aisle. These tilted up and emptied at each town, mostly with Indians carrying babies, bundles, and live stock. But our group in the rear remained intact as darkness descended and deepened. We talked and sang. One of the leaders was a 17-year-old girl who had the seat in front of me with her 38-year-old mother. Between them they had three children under the fare-paying age. The girl usually piled the babies in her seat and sat on the arm, nonchalantly smoking.

Just before midnight we happened to stop near an open store. The *lienciado* announced dramatically that in five minutes would begin the bus driver's saint day. We burst into "Las Mañanitas," the moving song with which Mexicans always greet such occasions. The bus driver opened an astounding lunch—a roast chicken, spaghetti, tomato salad, and rolls. The conductor passed around a big package of chicken tamales. We others went into the store and bought wine and buñuelos, a lacy type of sugared waffle. At twelve we started off into the dark, shouting toasts to the bus crew, the *lienciado*, the gringos, Mexico, and los Estados Unidos. The crew ate but did not drink. The strong, cheerful, polite little men who hold together these rickety crates and scoot all over Mexico on schedule will some day be the subject of folk ballads.

Now we all sang, and somebody in the darkness up front produced the inevitable guitar. The girl with the bulges recited, her thin body quivering, her eyes, and everybody else's, welling tears. I have learned that I get the best response when asked for American songs if I sing those with funny sounds in them like "How Come You Do Me Lick You Do Do Do" and—always sincere—"You Laddy Lay." Few could have known that old timer, yet the whole bus had come in on the "Hurray!" as if it had been rehearsed. Everybody knows all the words to all the Mexican songs, which they sang con amore until we arrived in Victoria at 1:30. Song is more necessary to the Mexicans than clothing, because the climate makes the latter superfluous in some places.

The Victoria station, as always, was crowded with shabby Indians, sitting patiently on bench or floor. These people, when they have to make trips, work as long as there is daylight, and then take the bus; rest seems desirable but not necessary, like sweets. The *lienciado*, shaking hands with all of us, descended to the embraces of a blond young thing who might easily be the belle of Victoria. I hope they soon graduate from second class so they can afford myriads of blond babies.

Now we let back our seats, but relocation was difficult with the night's chill seeping in around the badly fitted windows. Once the fat woman who replaced my seat companion at Victoria seized my arm in a fervent embrace, shuddered, and moaned. This was cold, nothing more.

At Monterrey I took a bus to Reynosa, as a change from the Laredos, which I feel I have exhausted. As I looked at Reynosa I could have been in Tombstone or the Tijuana I knew at a year before it was prettified up for tourists. Timber shacks on all the crowded streets housed cantinas, greasy restaurants, and cluttered general stores. Julia Lewis blared "Tu Solo Tu." A man with a battered face led two policemen on a grain search through the cantinas. My mousered suit, which had embarrassed me in Mexico City, now embarrassed me because it made me feel conspicuously well dressed. As far as I could see, the town was all like this. It was no place to begin living in "casas de huéspedes" so I asked an officer for the best hotel. Ten pesos was more than I had planned to pay and more than the room was worth, for it was

bare and uncomfortably furnished. The gray, cement private bath was the least sybaritic I had ever seen. The richly curved henna blonde who occupied the room at the head of the stairs let the top panel of her door down on its hinges when she was alone.

I found later that there was a distant and better part of town, but now I wanted only to get to the good old USA. In McAllen I went straight to the only drug store open on Sunday and downed two chocolate muddles and, after a respite, a double butter pecan-ice cream. God, what delight! For my supper in Reynosa I found a woman who made tamales for 15 centavos that were out of this world. If I lived where I could shuttle back and forth across the border, I would become an out-and-out voluptuary.

Monday was a holiday in McAllen, so I had to remain until Tuesday to shop with the odd dollars I had hoarded. I moved to the tourist section of Reynosa, largely to escape the juke boxes. My affection for "Tu Solo Tu" diminishes towards 3 a.m. and is still sluggish at 6 a.m. The little hotel over a store was more uncomfortable and cost two pesos less, but it had one of those architectural surprises so common in Latin America. This time it was a bathroom that extended over across the outer end of the bedroom so that the guest had to leave its door open to get light and air.

Tuesday, loaded with dime-store loot, I took the night bus to San Luis Potosí. Second class night buses on main highways usually have reclining seats but not those that go over country. Fortunately, I had a seat to myself. I squirmed about until I found the position in which I tolerated the least wood and metal. When I awoke, I knew I would be in pain as soon as I moved. We left at the Laredo-Mexico City highway for a second I did not know. Tropical foliage burst from lawns and flowers, and little houses with red roofs and thatch roofs. The clouds into which we ascended gave it all a soft-focus effect. I lay watching this dream world float past until we stopped at a church house for breakfast, where I had to unclerk myself, take back at the washroom, bucket of water, and single towel provided made me realize how unnecessary it is to wash before breakfast.

When we ascended again, we looked down on the clouds, which lay like lakes of whipped cream in the valleys, making wooded islands of the mountain peaks. Blue shadows tinted them from below and the rising sun gilded them from above. That vista paid for the creaks.

San Luis Potosí, rich from mines, sits regally in a flat, rock-strewn plain. There were several *casas de huéspedes* near the station. The second I investigated looked clean enough, so I took a room at three pesos. Some *casas* are so poor and uncomfortable as to be impossible and some are quite cozy. Most, like this one, are neither. The rooms nearly always cluster around a patio and one has to open his double doors to this center of family and animal life for light and air.

Even cheaper than the *casas* is the *mesón*. Here the guest can tether his stock in the big patio or corral and roll up in his serape on a wooden bed or the floor for a few centavos. Usually a blacksmith stand by to shoe the horses and a woman to make highly peppered soups and stews. The initiated who are seduced by the undeniable picturesqueness of some of these *mesones* will encounter a whole new world of odors and insects.

The most trying feature of cheap living generally is the bath and toilet. The brutal truth is that the more humble folk do not know how to retreat and treat this part of the house. Aside from the inept

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# Great-Great-Granddaughter of a Noble

By Hudson Strode



Water Color.

By Angel Zamarripa.

**D**URING our visit in Pátzcuaro, Señor Sánchez took us to an atelier run by a dark-skinned woman who held her head high and whose manner was quite impressive, and withal gracious in her way. She came from a scion of Spanish grandees. Her great-great-grandfather was an eighteenth-century count who had taken an Indian girl to wife. The house we stopped at had been inherited. Because the wheat fields and the mines had passed into other hands long ago, the woman had set up a workshop for lacquer ware and filled her drawing-room with showcases. This being Sunday, the workshop was not in operation. But half-grudgingly, as if she were stooping to do aliens a favor, the proprietress permitted us to enter. At first sight of her I immediately thought of Paxinou, the Greek actress, in her role of Pilar in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. There was the proud carriage, the amused scorn, the good-looking homeliness. Perhaps the darker duskiness of complexion made the eyes of the Mexican woman more smoldering, if with less reason or purpose than those of Paxinou's Pilar.

Through a reception vestibule we stepped into a patio that was so thickly embowered in foliage that you could not squeeze along the narrowed paths without some exotic branch reaching out to clutch at your sleeve or to whisper against your ear. Green was the overwhelming predominant note—green in every shade, from a dank and waxy blackish green to the ethereal green of a plant I had never known.

"Up there on the roof at the back we do our work," the woman said, indicating a flight of narrow stone stairs. "Part of the roof is covered—for rainy hours. The workers do better in the open air. Those at the edges can look down into the garden to rest their eyes. The others can look off to the mountains, town affords. No men. I want no men about. Men are troublesome to manage. Some of them have ambition, and that is tiresome, for in time they would try to run the shop." She thrust out her chin against masculine opposition. "The girls are very clever. I have taught them the best traditions of lacquer-making. I have ten girls. They are all experts—the best the ing. I pay good wages. I give them an appetizing

lunch, and they like to work here. Would you care to see some of our products?" She turned, and led the way diagonally down one of the jungle-thick paths to the room that had once been the drawing-room.

"A considerable sense of self-importance," Thérèse commented sotto voce as the woman entered her showroom like a grande dame become businesswoman—or was it a businesswoman simulating the grande dame?

With a gesture that was both executive and elegant, she threw open some solid blinds and let the light stream in through ironbarred grillwork. Where divans once stood were now showcases full of lacquer ware. The woman took her position behind the longest showcase like a presiding deity unimpressed with the reactions of human beings of any category. While we bent to admire this piece and that, she held her head in the clouds.

Señor Sánchez remarked that I was in Mexico for the third time, gathering material for a history of the nation I was writing. The woman's chin lifted a trifle more. She looked at me over the showcase top with a cool scrutiny. Then with a gesture of not believing anything much would come of it, she reached under a shelf and brought out two slim paper-bound brochures. "If you are really writing a book about this land, these may be of some service to you. This, a brief but accurate history of the town. This, notations on my family and my workshop." She handed the books over the showcase. "They were prepared by men of distinction from the University of Mexico. With my compliments, señor."

"Señor Strode is himself a professor in a university in the United States," Señor Sánchez hastened to inform her.

The woman regarded me again, elevated her eyebrows, and made a slight and noncommittal bow. "In that case he should be able to appreciate the better the information in these pages."

"You flatter me, señora. Mil gracias," I thanked her with a studied bow and a hint of a grin.

She acknowledged the bow, and commented on the grin with a slight drooping of her right eyelid.

Wagus had discovered two stunning cigarette boxes in magenta lacquer and asked the price. The woman took up one of the boxes, casually opened it, as if to call attention to the creamy inside and the superior workmanship of the hinges.

"How much?" Wagus asked.

As if touching on imponderables, the proprietress called the figure.

"How much for the two?"

The woman named precisely double the price of one.

"But for two would I not get a discount?" Wagus insisted.

The muscles at the corner of the woman's mouth tightened with perceptible scorn. "There is one of each piece. The price does not change—by the pair, or by the hundred." The dusky descendant of a Castilian nobleman revealed by her inflection that even the mention of money was hardly seemly where it concerned a work of art created in her atelier. To haggle was utterly degrading.

Wagus was not in the least put out of countenance. He renounced the imminent transaction by settling both the boxes back with cavalier emphasis. No bargain, no trade, with Wagus.

Thérèse and I both had fixed our eyes on two identical cigarette boxes in a rich oyster-white lacquer. They were smartly and immaculately unadorned and as smooth in texture as a gardenia petal. We knew instantly that they belonged on a certain Swedish table in our living-room. The price was high for

Mexico, but small for a shop like Jensen's in New York, where they might happily have found themselves.

"I trust you do not mind making a sale on Sunday," I suggested, though I noted no sign of demurring. As she shrugged philosophically, I added quickly, "We have come a long way, and this is our only opportunity to possess such treasures."

She appreciated my tact and tore off a sheet of the newspaper she had already reached for. Wrapping the boxes neatly, she tied them with twine expertly and economically.

When Hoagland decided to buy the boxes Wagus had declined, the proprietress cast a slanting glance at Wagus, who got even by adjusting his pince-nez and peering closely, pretending to detect a defect on the bottom of one of the boxes.

We all turned when we saw Señor Sánchez bowing ceremoniously toward the doorway. A bent and withered old woman stood there, looking like a wrinkled twist of tobacco wrapped in a lavender shroud. Squinting as if her eyesight was not of the best, she emerged into the room like a disembodied spirit.

"Mi madre, la Señora de la This de la That," the woman announced. We bowed. The old lady raised her bent head, looked toward us, and bowed gravely as we murmured "How do you do?"

"These people are Americans," Señor Sánchez said, in a manner to suggest that he hoped we honored the house by our presence.

"I have seen Americans before," the old lady said. Then with a gesture of smoothing back her unkempt mane of white hair that looked tempest-tossed on this still afternoon, she added graciously, "You are welcome." But she did not add "Esta casa es suya."

"Would you permit the visitors to see your wonderful kitchen, señora?" Señor Sánchez asked ingratiatingly. "They are sincerely interested in all phases of Mexican life." Although he addressed the old lady, he ended by raising his eyebrows questioningly toward her daughter.

The daughter turned toward Thérèse. "Would you care to see the kitchen, señora?"

"Very much—if it's convenient."

"It is convenient, of course, if you so desire, señora," she said, almost ceremoniously.

We went along the roofed gallery that traversed the south side of the patio. Technically the patio stopped where there was no more soil, where the tiled floor of the kitchen began. But the yellow-flowered vines and the white-blossoming shrubs spilled over into the kitchen area. The fourth wall did not exist—it was absent, like the fourth wall of a stage set. It was like those modern Swedish rooms where one wall is of glass to bring the out-of-doors within doors, except that here there was no glass whatever, and the patio with its color and its perfume flowed into the room.

It was a kitchen for a fairy tale or a romantic opera. The stove and the oven were of blue-and-orange tile, built into the north wall—more like a shrine than a place for cooking. Utensils of hammered brass and platter of beaten silver caught and reflected the dappled sifting through the greenery. There was an orderly array of ceramic jars and old bateas, ruby-colored goblets, and antique painted chests with wrought-silver locks. And hanging in the vaguely defined boundary between patio and kitchen were two bird cages, one with two canaries and the other with a single Mexican mockingbird.

As if in our honor, the old lady put her face close to the canaries and made sipping sounds. The pair

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# Patterns of an Old City

## THE MAN WHO ARRESTED TIME

By Howard S. Phillips

**M**EMORY functions some times by means of incidental and wayward associations or connotations. A fleeting waft of perfume, a glimpse of a passing face in the street, an odd gesture or a remark made by someone, a tune of an old song, the savour of a dish, the peculiar shape of a tree, a rock or a cloud—any odd or commonplace experience or sensation might bring back the memory of something that had been forgotten long ago, bring it back sharply and lend it a new and previously unperceived significance.

Enjoying not long ago an excellent glass of *amontillado* in the company of some casual friends—a quite pleasant company which did not, however, compel my total absorption—it occurred to me that I had not savoured this particular kind of wine in many years and that its peculiar taste and aroma were associated with other and quite different experiences in my past. And then, through the deviating course of memory, the image of don Artemio intrusively emerged in my mind.

Don Artemio died years ago and I attended his funeral. He was taken in an ornate hearse from the stately mansion in Colonia Roma and buried in the family crypt on the Hill of Tepeyac. His death, as I remember it now, had about it a sense of wholly logical finality. He was in his eighties; his life's task had been definitely finished years before; his lusty vitality was irreparably undermined through months of wasting illness and his avidity had reached its culminating point. No death can be totally unmoored; though in his case I would say that the attendant mourning was not evoked by a sense of personal loss but by the disturbing reminder implicit in all death that life is ephemeral and finite.

And yet I believe that my presence at his funeral was not merely in obedience of propriety and that in his passing I actually sensed the grief of personal loss. I cannot say that we had ever been truly close friends, for his venerable age, his highly peculiar character and the insurmountable distance between our respective positions naturally rendered such friendship impossible; though occasionally, over a period of years, I enjoyed his friendly hospitality. Very old people—harboring a storehouse of accumulated knowledge and experience, embodying, so to speak, in their person the survival of a vanished world—are likely to arouse in one a feeling of wonder, and if they preserve a mental vitality and are articulate they can be singularly stimulating companions. In fact, I am quite sure that don Artemio was one of the very few invariably stimulating persons I have ever known. His personality had the subtle opulence, the hidden puissance and the mellow and dry pungency of the very fine old wine he so kindly shared with me.

I met him in the terrace of a Cuernavaca hotel where I was spending a weekend. We were sitting in wicker chairs under the arches, both immersed in our reading, when of a sudden he closed his book and turning to me remarked in an offhand way something about the enduring friendship of books. "This, I've been reading," he said. "Aristotle's essays—the one on Nicomachean Ethics. It is as comforting as an old worn garment. You read it again every so often and it is always new."

So our conversation did not begin with the usual reference to weather. I remember that I was somewhat taken aback by his remark, for there was little in his appearance that would indicate an intellectual turn of mind. Rather tall and thin, with a glossy bald head fringed by smooth white hair and a long narrow face with steadfast black eyes, he looked like almost any well-to-do Mexican gentleman whose life had been spent in a not too exhausting pursuit of the more common worldly rewards. "How poor," he said, "are those who have never discovered the benignant fellowship of books—the fellowship that is unfailingly loyal and never obtrusive and that can be put aside at one's will."

I endeavored to make some fitting reply, and this started us off on a conversation that lasted through the rest of the afternoon. It was a very pleasant afternoon; though in some way his talk affected me disconcertingly, for while it had nothing of the bookish about it, it revealed a profound and variegated intelligence, a kind of pristine and self-acquired wisdom, which was not readily contestable.

I spent a large part of the following day in his company and when in the evening I bade him goodbye, he suggested that he would be pleased if I looked him up in the city.

\* \* \*

He lived in an imposing though run-down mansion in Colonia Roma, cared for by several trusty old servants, a solitary master of an abandoned old house, dwelling in splendid isolation. His solitude, one soon perceived, however, was not a hardship: it was his chosen way of life. His wife and three daughters were living in Europe, and they had been gone a long time. He seldom spoke of them, and whenever he did it was without a hint of wistfulness or malice. One gathered that their separation stemmed from quite rational causes, that it was a perfectly logical termination of a relationship which had never been very firm or close and which had finally grown untenable. They were living their own life in Paris, and he was content to be left to himself.

I gathered, however, that don Artemio's solitude was a penalty nevertheless—the penalty of a man who had sacrificed all other objects in life for the sole aim of possessing power, and who in having lost this one preeminent possession cared nothing for the loss of everything else. His family, his home, the vital premises of a normal life, were swept away in the debacle when the fortress he had built for himself and so dauntlessly defended collapsed before the assailing foe.

But now that the battle was over and its tumult and shouting had subsided to faint and undisturbing echoes, in his serene retirement all these things were merely the food for peaceful reminiscence, for tranquil meditation, the academic themes for amenable talk. There was no admission of defeat, however, in his talk. His personal failure did not imply the failure of his faith or the surrender of his principles. Existing anachronistically a century behind his time, alone and forlorn in a world that had cast him out, a world wherein he had no footing, he preserved a granite

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Ruins at Chichén Itzá.

Photo. By Mary Saint Albans.

## The Day Begins at Four

By Stewart J. Walpole

**S**HOOTING quail in Yucatan is quite different from the same sport in the United States. For several reasons. Take, for example, the tropical and humid climate. From November to March, the coolest part of the year in Yucatan, the temperature from nine a.m. to five p.m. is likely to be good and high, hence we get up about four hours after midnight. This permits us to seek a lively open-all-night eating place facing the central plaza, where our comrades rendezvous.

Quail are abundant everywhere in the hemp fields, the best places may take an hour by auto from the city of Merida, which is the capital of the state with a population of 80,000. The rainy season, it might be interpolated, provides protection to wild life and accounts for perpetuation of many species despite guns and trapping.

The choicest shooting is where expansive fields of young sisal hemp are less rocky and best cultivated. When I say less rocky, I mean acreage which is smooth looking from a distance, but nevertheless presents footing full of treacherous holes, some of them very deep. Craggy chunks which look solid, but tip over when you step on them add to the hazards. As to cultivation, this only signifies that the ground bet-

ween rows of henequen plants has been cleared to some extent of the lush tropical spiny bushes and tough vines. But at the best, there is a tangled mass of new vegetation, plenty high enough to make progress without many a hard fall more an answer to prayers than to any exercise of judgment.

At four-thirty a.m. we should be on our way, usually in an open car and generally on a good piece of hard road, permitting thirty miles an hour safely. One of the first things you learn about the tropics on your initial trip is that in the wee hours traveling in an open car is a shivery experience unless you wear a good overcoat or are prepared to wrap yourself in a blanket.

Well fortified with steaming black coffee against the chill of the morning, our little party is soon beyond the city limits. We chug along without being able to see the stone walls which line and enclose all hemp fields, because here, as elsewhere, it is always darkest just before dawn. Somehow it has always seemed to me that anywhere twenty degrees north or south of the equator, the stars are more numerous and nearer than in the temperate zones. This night no moon detracts from the brilliance of the Milky Way and other familiar constellations. When you are

in so flat a situation, you see stars not only overhead, but also around you, down to the very horizon in every direction.

Whether it is atmospheric conditions peculiar to Yucatan or something else, you do see more blue, red, yellow, and silver scintillations, and orbs that glow intermittently all over the cloudless sky. No matter how prosaic one may be, he cannot altogether fail to react emotionally to the galaxy of a clear tropical night. The most unimpressionable person feels the beauty even if he does not rise to sentimental expression.

Finally, we discern a group of three spectral figures and halt when we reach them. They prove to be two little brown-skinned Maya men and the majordomo, or overseer, of the plantation, who comes to convey the welcome of his chief, who is unable to join us, but seeks our honorable company at the casa grande when convenient to us.

The guns are assembled in the glare of the headlights and we fill our belts with shells of French manufacture, hang game bags on the Indians, who also carry our water containers and extra ammunition. They seem only passively interested, but are cheerful enough. This reminds me that these Mayas never appear to be curious about the affairs of white people. You seldom feel that they notice what you wear or care how you comport yourself.

The dogs, pointers preferred, because they stand the climate better than setters, are in rear carrier and have a comfortable ride. It may seem surprising to many, but Yucatan sportsmen demand stylish field performers. When the amplitude of game is considered, this is quite a commentary on the sportsmanship of the shooters. The dogs must possess keen scenting powers, gay carriage, good pace, and range adapted to the character of the cover. The bird dogs of Yucatan are nowadays bred from stock of the best United States strains, and trained locally. Formerly, my friends there imported from France and Spain, but European dogs, although handsome and reliable, are slower in action and less animated afield.

While our party is busy getting organized, several blanket-enveloped Indians going at a dog trot have passed us with a murmured "Buenos días, Señores." These are workers in the processing of hemp at one of the local haciendas and their labor in the fields and factories begins at dawn. As many of them must come several miles, their day is long enough, even if they do return to their thatched chozas at noon.

In some respects, Mayas are very fortunate. Because they are content with simple food and clothing, they have no hopeless ambition to accumulate worldly possessions. But a wife that is a wife must be expert in grinding corn to make the masa for tortillas and always have the bath and change of white cotton clothing ready.

The ensemble of a male is a pair of sandals, a straw hat, a garment serving as pants resembling shorts, a shirt worn like a Chinaman's coat—that is, not tucked in—and a small colored apron lashed around the waist and falling to just above the knees. One thing above all pleases you about these descendants of a mighty race. They are absolutely devoted to soap and water. Men, women, and children keep themselves meticulously clean.

Yucatan is so flat a country it only seems a moment after the first streaks of old Sol shoot up in the east before it is broad daylight. Now we can see immense fields of small henequen, stretching away so far as the eye can reach in all directions, broken here and there with patches of montes, a name which describes thickly growing small trees that often shelter and maintain mixed-breed cattle.

A few words here about henequen, sometimes called "Green Gold," because it has in the past brought much of the precious metal to the peninsula. Henequen looks like what we call the Century plant. It finally reaches ten feet or more in height, and from its thick sword-pointed and saw-edged leaves is produced a long fibre used very extensively for binder twine and ship cordage.

The most satisfactory shooting is to be had in territory where the henequen crop has reached not more than a foot of vertical growth. It is a marvel that dogs are able to negotiate these fields without serious harm. A dog cannot advantageously run between rows; he must frequently leap. One is reminded of the grace of the porpoise or hurdling of grey-hounds when bird dogs are quartering. For the most part, it is possible for the shooters to follow straight paths which are wide and much easier to walk than through the hazardous rows between plants.

In selecting a field of henequen for our hunt, after consideration of the cover and footing, we have been mindful of the direction of the wind. There is so much country and so many birds that it is easy to work into the wind for several hours with only an occasional interrupting wall. These barriers are about five feet high and are made with stones from the fields. They are not hard to get over; if you are riding a horse, one of the Maya helpers pulls down enough wall to let you pass and then piles it up again.

Each of our party is clad in starched white cotton and high boots or puttees. The latter sometimes reach up well above the knees as a protection against thorns and snakes. We wear cotton because it is coolest; it is starched so insects are easier to see and brush off.

Now, speaking of insects, the worst of these pests is the garrapata, a creature almost microscopic and as invidious as our own tick or chigger. However, after you learn not to enter montes where cattle are or have been, you are not so likely to become the host to a thousand roomers and boarders. If the garrapata reaches your skin, it immediately burrows in and until it is safely ensconced, you do not feel any discomfort. You are not conscious of anything crawling on you and until the intolerable itch begins, you may not be aware of your predicament. As to snakes, it is commonly said that a visitor to the shores of Yucatan spends the first few weeks worrying himself almost sick about vipers and then forgets them entirely! As a matter of fact, exceedingly few white men are bitten, but a good many of the barelegged Indians come to grief because they spend so much time in the fields and their abbreviated clothing lends no protection. That henequen fields are much infested with a great variety of big and little venomous snakes I know from a number of startling experiences. And, too, the government offers a substantial reward for bringing 'em back dead.

During the dry season one must be most careful about smoking while traversing the fields, which could burn for miles and do immense damage. Our host doesn't smoke at all, not on account of the fire danger, but because he says "it disgusts the dogs."

The pair of dogs are just as eager to begin hunting as any you ever saw, but so perfectly are they trained that they wait for orders. We climb the wall and jump down. Our two Indians hand over the loaded guns and give the dogs a boost. We face the slight but steady breeze and follow the dogs, which quarter every bit of ground because the plantation may hold a bevy anywhere. At this hour you will hear many calls of "Bob, Bob White," but owing to the acoustic conditions, it is difficult to locate exactly the source of the sound. One explanation of this is that underly-

ing much of this country are untold miles of caverns, some dry, but many containing enormous lakes or underground rivers. Often you tread on a piece of limestone that the impact of your hobbled boots tells you is but a thin cover of a cave.

Until the sun is a few degrees above the horizon, the vegetation is cozy and dripping with dew. As you look over the field with the disc at your back, leaves and stalks reflect the prismatic colors from a myriad of globules. By fixing your mind on your starched clothing you can avoid getting soaked, except your footwear, which must needs be well oiled to keep the water out.

Between guarding against a tippy rock, watching for treacherous holes, avoiding the stiletto points of the henequen and the spines of cut-down little locust trees, all the while watching for a possible six-foot-long rattler, you are reasonably busy. Of course, we are now speaking of one of our first ventures. Anyone may acquire in time a certain technique in evading spears; he becomes a skillful acrobat balancing on rolling stones, and he can spot concealed holes by the peculiarities of the vegetation that surrounds them.

Other handicaps in all this shooting territory are the thousands of sharp little stumps of small trees which have been cut off about six inches above the ground. They are vicious obstacles, but thanks be, you soon learn to sense their exact location by the lighter color of the vines which hide them.

The dogs are wearing boots on all fours. From the beginning of their days afield they have had their pads toughened by regular soaking in the juice of sour oranges. This is a useful treatment, but does not suffice. Even the thick sole of the moccasin type of boot is frequently pierced by a thorn and the abrasive character of limestone makes the footwear problem rather constant and expensive.

Now for a more cheerful picture! Fortunately you seldom go more than ten minutes at a time without seeing one of the dogs making game and snapping into a stylish point. Usually bexies are large enough to give all of us at least two shots apiece, and then follows the customary excitement incident to the retrieving act. Because these immense fields are so uniform in appearance you will have little idea, within forty yards, of where your bird fell if you momentarily take your eye off the spot. Should your bird get so far as one of the aforementioned montes before dropping

and you go in to direct the dog's search, you are sure to get a dose of garrapatas. Unless you brush yourself quickly, a multitude of the critters will have taken lodging and no matter how careful you are a few of them escape detection.

Well, we give the panting dogs a drink and look at their feet; also make a careful inspection of their eyes, for garrapatas have a special liking for the tender membrane of the lids, and are capable of creating an ugly sore spot.

Here we seldom hunt singles. For two reasons: There are plenty of bexies and secondly, because the birds flushed and shot at invariably fly considerable distances or go into little patches of thick woods. By six o'clock in the morning, remember, we have stopped for shooting at least twelve times and the sun's slanting rays are slowing up the dogs and making us perspire freely.

Probably there are few places in the world where the spirit of romance is more readily awakened than here in Yucatan, where a thousand years ago there existed a great civilization. Our shooting today has been over a plantation called San Pedro, and this location is marked on archaeological maps as the site of a former city. Here and there on this place are mounds reaching thirty feet high. They are planted with henequen just as uniformly as all the level part and are clothed with the same kind of verdure. From a distance there is nothing about these hillocks to suggest the artificial or hand of man, but when you cross one of them you see they are composed of cut stones, and should you look carefully you are sure to find ornamental shapes and blocks bearing bas-relief sculpture. On this spot once stood a small temple, a monument to the vanity of the priests or nobility of a lost civilization.

You might think, since Yucatan is not well known as a sporting area, that quail shooting there would lack some of the amenities that we expect from our companions afield at home. But one of the first things I found as a guest of Yucatan sportsmen was that no pleasant gesture was omitted. Don Felix Sanchez is a capital marksman, but he praised my poor shooting and when I missed a very easy one, he offered an alibi for me. Nor is anyone careless with his gun, either on account of his own party or an Indian passing seemingly out of shotgun range.

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## Always

By Walter W. Stephen

SOME day the tomes of wise men will be one  
 With the forgotten books of Babylon,  
 And yet... a fool can strum a haunting strain  
 That will endure while any ground is greener

# Mexico's Gift to Venezuela

By Gerald Thornby

**A**S an eloquent symbol of international amity and of the historical background which binds the nations of Latin America, Mexico made a gift to the people of Venezuela in the form of a monument to the great hero of its national independence, José María Morelos y Pavón. Occupying a prominent site in the city of Caracas, this monument was officially presented at an impressive ceremony which was attended by high government officials, the diplomatic corps and a large gathering of the populace, by Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán, Chief of the Department of the Federal District, in representation of President Alemán.

The work of Juan Olaguibel—who has also executed the monuments to Morelos in Cuernavaca and at the Morelos Dam in Baja California, as well as the famous figure of Diana over the fountain facing the entrance to Chapultepee Park—the monument which now stands at Caracas is one of the finest examples of this artist's work.

The highly significant speech delivered by Lic. Casas Alemán at the unveiling of this monument, which defined the salient act of the impressive ceremony, is herewith reproduced in English translation:

"Distinguished listeners:

With solemn reverence I crossed the limpid sky of America to come to this generous Venezuelan soil and to fulfill before its noble people the high mission implicit in this ceremony, which for me means more than a formal act, for it bears the significance of strengthening and deepening day after day the bonds of friendship which are so necessary among those who must regard themselves as being united by a common destiny.

And my satisfaction is manifest in the high privilege bestowed upon me to be the bearer of most cordial greetings which are sent to you by President Miguel Alemán, the hardy champion of our cause in Mexico and the sincere participant in all the problems which affect the life of our brothers in the New Continent.

On a day of indelible remembrance the City of Mexico adorned itself in gala dress to celebrate an event whose transcendent significance deeply moved the hearts of our people. On that day the equestrian statue of the great liberator Bolívar, wherewith your generosity honored us, was unveiled upon one of the main glorietas of the Paseo de la Reforma. We rendered it the warm tribute of our admiration not only because it perpetuates his memory, but also because on that site remained the symbol, the great lesson with all its austere significance, which must be heeded by the generations to come who in times of severest trial will stalwartly foregather before it in order to reaffirm their concept of the honor to be sovereign and free.

And as to ourselves, each time we pause in front of his eminent figure we seem to hear the words he directed to General Santander in 1825: 'I will do all I can for America, and later, even if it all should perish, I will scorn all the world's offers for my glory.' Such



Monument to José María Morelos y Pavón, executed by Juan Olaguibel, who stands at its side, which was presented by Mexico to Venezuela.

unselfishness, such renunciation of personal interests, have been and will be in our conscience an inexhaustible source of inspiration in so far as they refer to the cherished interests of our own Fatherland.

Because of this we are grateful to you, and because of this we wish also—in the aim of loyal reciprocity—to confide to the trust of this great nation the statue which represents the immortal Morelos, the

refulgent light of our Independence, who would smile happily if he could see that his dreams of continental fraternity have come true and that through his memory and in the great shade of the two giants our brother nations clasp hands in a fervent demonstration of affection and understanding.

His exemplary life left a luminous wake which began at Valladolid, in the land of Michoacán, continued through his humble parish of Caracuaro, and reached its greatest brightness at San Cristóbal Ecatepec, a brightness that projected itself in the endless refulgence of immortality.

Both heroes, consecrated by the same splendid aurora which illumined the birth of our independence, in their respective places, have been and will be the torches that illumine our aims, the anvils upon which our virtues are forged, and the crucibles wherein our ideals are purified.

And nothing can better honor their memory than the union of our endeavors directed in defense of civilization and in safeguarding our concept of human dignity and welfare. They have left to us an established doctrine of liberty, and it is incumbent upon us to invest our greatest effort to be worthy of it, though not with haughtiness but with humility, and in the conviction that the only enduring superiority in the life of countries is that which stems from good will in deed as well as in thought.

\* \* \*

In Mexico a steadfast task has been initiated after a long and dolorous experience, impelled by a genuine desire to assure the greatness of its destiny; and in our effort there is always present the guiding memory of our heroes, and we are animated by the sacrifice of our martyrs. Yet not only must we strive to attain the goals which define the material progress of nations, but we must likewise strive to attain a balance in the world which can assure a life that is more just and abundant.

The perspectives before us lead us to the conviction that America is living through times of grave responsibilities, and that it is imperative to strengthen the system of conciliation for the sake of unity, of peace and understanding, which may build a bulwark whose solidity can assure the permanence of our rights and the dignity of our existence.

The plan of international cooperation as a system will be converted into a sturdy safeguard of our heritage and of our future; but for this we must primarily renounce the use of force and base ourselves upon the consecration of justice and of mutual respect as an invariable norm of conduct.

Comprehending the gravity of the moment, it is urgent to prepare our timely contribution to the world, and nothing will facilitate this noble task as the coordination of our resources, the strengthening of our economies, and the affinity of our spirits in the fervent striving for justice and for liberty.

The Old World finds itself rent and wounded, and its wounds are so deep that its restoration is difficult. America, on the other hand, developing in youth and strength, is devoting its major efforts not solely to the solution of its internal problems but to alleviate the desperate situation which assails the Old World.

Therefore inter-American friendship acquires an

essential significance and the cordiality which exists among our nations assumes an extraordinary import.

The different countries of America profess a common creed and libertarian ideals and have the same devotion inspired in the purified civic concepts whereupon rests our institutional rule. Thus we must behold with concern the future of humanity in this tremendous hour of decision.

Jointly we will endeavor to sustain the political structure of a Continent which does not measure sacrifices when they are made in the cause to elevate democracy and to consolidate the basic elements of culture.

Mexico is pledged to this unselfish solidarity, and its people as well as yours can represent a great hope if we acknowledge the existence of our coordinated aims as the fruit of a conjunction of qualities, among which we must justly recognize the tenacity of character which imbues optimism with serene strength.

Such valuable factors make us guard a complete faith in the future, strengthening the conviction that America, one and indivisible, will be always comforted by the enduring friendship of our nations.

In the name of my Fatherland and of our Chief Executive I express my most fervent wishes for the well-being and prosperity of Venezuela and for its worthy leaders, carrying in my heart the utmost confidence in the greatness of its fruitful and auspicious future."



Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán, Chief of the Department of the Department of the Federal District.

# Manuel Tolsa

By Trent Elwood Sanford

**T**HE EVER-RECURRING influence of the ancient architecture of Greece and Rome at repeated intervals throughout architectural history has done more to interfere with the development of architecture than any other agency. There can be no doubt of the greatness of Classic Greece; and the Parthenon will always be held in veneration as one of the most perfect examples of architecture in the world. Nor can there be any doubt of the greatness of Roman architectural and engineering triumphs. Requiescant in pace.

But the world will not let them rest. They have been repeatedly dragged forth to interrupt originality.

This was true of the time of the Renaissance, which, though at first refreshing, grew into the unimaginative "correctness" of Palladio, Vignola, and Herrera. Having interrupted the Plateresque when that style was just blossoming, the eventual reaction was terrific.

It was true as recently as the time of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, when a group of architectural bigwigs, patting themselves on the back at getting together for a fine dinner and commenting among themselves that it was the greatest meeting of artists since the fifteenth century, puffed out their chests and said: "Let's make it Classic." Unfortunately, the effect of that decision did not end with the World's Fair. For thirty years afterward, Vitruvius, Vignola, and Palladio, dead these many hundred years, even dictated how rolled steel beams should be covered! Only recently have they been given another well-earned rest. Requiescant in pace.

And in between those periods, it was true when Spain became paralyzed by the Royal Academy, which adopted "Prohibition of Imagination" and dished out ideas and combinations of motifs and rules for using them, and the only thing that was left for the over-indulging, intoxicated Baroque was to be called vile names.

It is an interesting thought that it has always been the copyists of the Classic who have called other styles harsh names—never the originators nor developers of new styles, groping blindly as they may have been, who have thus vented their spleens. It was the unimaginative Herrerans who contemptuously dubbed the preceding decorative architecture Plateresque; it was Sir Christopher Wren, prolific classicist, who is credited with giving the name Gothic, meaning "barbarous," to the greatest creative craftsmanship of all time; and it was the sterile Academicians who intolerantly hurled venomous epithets at the Baroque. And more recently it has been said of the cold and formal cathedrals of Mexico City and Puebla that "they are the only edifices of the vice-regal epoch up to the arrival of Gonzalez Velasquez and of Tolsa which are distinguished by correctness, simplicity, and sobriety."

For a while Mexico went merrily on its way with elaborate and exuberant examples of the Churrigueresque which outdid those of the mother country. Here the Moorish-influenced Spaniard was transplanted to a rich new country where his background and rugged individualism blended with the temperament of a different race of artists and craftsmen whose latent artistic propensities were coming more and more to the fore. This blend took him to heights which the master-builders in the more conservative mother country ne-

ver reached. The acme of his imagination is represented by the superlative Baroque of the portal and towers of the great church of Taxco, the bewildering Churrigueresque facades of the little church of San Diego at Guanajuato and of San Cayetano at Valenciana near by, and even more especially by the brilliant and glittering jewelry of the facades of San Francisco Acatepec near Puebla.

But even Mexico was not to be left unmolested indefinitely to work out her own architectural salvation. "Mother" still wanted to dictate. About twenty-five years after the opening of the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand in Spain, King Charles III established in Mexico the Academia de los Nobles Artes de San Carlos de la Nueva España. The name sounds very impressive; perhaps it was too weighty, for, as in Spain, it was not long before a bad attack of acute regimentation set in. The new Academy's first professor of architecture was Gonzalez Velasquez; and, in 1791, Manuel Tolsa, a Spaniard born in Enguera in 1757 and trained in the Academy of San Carlos at Valencia, was made director.

Ten years after assuming office Tolsa took time off from his duties of regimenting architecture (and what he thought were his duties of stripping Churrigueresque churches to make them what he considered to be classically correct, succeeding only in making them naked and forlorn) to cast the bronze equestrian statue of Charles IV which now stands in Mexico City in the center of the circle where the Avenida Juárez turns to become the splendid Paseo de la Reforma. It was the first important statue in bronze to be cast in the Western Hemisphere and is a beautiful piece of work. In fact, to give Tolsa his due, it is one of the great equestrian statues of the world. In sculpture, Tolsa's work shows strong individuality, a thorough knowledge of anatomy, and brilliant execution. The only real fault that can be found with the statue is an ethical one; it confers on the rider a dignity to which that ignoble monarch could by no stretch of the imagination be considered entitled.

During the War of Independence the statue, which had originally been placed in the Zócalo, was encased in a huge wooden globe to save it from destruction by over-ardent patriots, and later, that move having been deemed insufficient, was removed, not to be re-erected (in a new location) until 1852. It is now said to be tolerated only because of the beauty of the horse upon which the king is mounted! It is spoken of as "the bronze horse," "the little horse" (it weighs about 30 tons), and even "the iron horse," but never is there a mention of the rider. (Incidentally, there is a fine statue of Cuauhtémoc in one of the circles of the Paseo. Try to find one of Cortés!)

The fine sculptured group, Faith, Hope, and Charity, on the clock tower of the Cathedral of Mexico City is Tolsa's work, as is also the high altar with the bronze figure of La Purísima Virgen in the Cathedral of Puebla.

In architecture, Tolsa's work was too formal, too academic, too much a product of what he had been taught in the Academy in Spain and a reflection of the regimentation there. Two of his principal works are the severe and immense Classic College of Mines in the center of Mexico City (1797-1813) and the Church of Nuestra Señora de Loreto (1809-1816), a

few blocks east of the cathedral. The church has a great Palladian dome, now in a sad state of disrepair. In addition to their Classic severity, both structures are especially noted for their lack of stability, underpinning of the former having required the expenditure of thousands of dollars year after year and the latter having rested for many years at a precarious angle.

Tolsa, however, could probably be readily forgiven for things that he perpetrated which were his own; but the great damage that he wrought, with presumptuous and blatant egotism on the work of earlier generations, is harder to forgive. Many a guidebook will describe the exterior of a church, then say "interior uninteresting." This is rather generally true. And, to a great extent, Tolsa can be thanked for it. An idea of what some of the interiors must have looked like before Tolsa and his disciples, in their fanatical rage for extermination, got hold of them is indicated by examples which escaped, such as Tepotzotlán and Taxco, or, in the Cathedral of Mexico City, where Tolsa first wielded his axe, by the Capilla de los Reyes and various other detached examples of earlier work there, which remain in the midst of what Sylvester Baxter calls "a melancholy nakedness of devastated surfaces."

To make matters worse, mediocre architects were imported from Italy, and many richly carved and gilded altar-pieces were torn out and broken up for kindling wood, while their places were taken by lifeless interpretations of classic "correctness, simplicity, and

sobriety." With an intolerant thoroughness exceeded only by that of the conquistadores in destroying the work of the Aztecs, the Academy had replaced charming, intoxicated exuberance with illfitting cold affectation.

There were, however, a few rays of sunshine behind that Pseudo-Classic cloud. Fortunately, travel in Mexico was not as easy at that time as it is today; many important cities were rather isolated one from another and thus the more remote examples of architecture were spared; and in the less accessible cities, the earlier styles, to some extent at least, continued. Even more important, these outlying cities, not too closely in touch with the national capital and the Academy, had developed some unimported personalities in architecture; and even the Classic was better executed by natives of Mexico who, though recognizing the Classic fashion, were not regimented by it, and more broad-minded and less cursed with the academic training of the day, could at the same time successfully handle the Baroque and the Churrigueresque—and even Gothesque.

It was the beginning of a demand for versatility in handling styles.

To meet the outstanding personality of the period it is necessary to leave the Pan-American highway just north of Ixmiquilpan, drive the ninety miles of new pavement to Querétaro, and continue, past the "spot" where Maximilian was shot, along the dusty, narrow, winding trail over the fields to Celaya.





President Miguel Alemán, accompanied by Mrs. Alemán and (from right to left) Lic. Juan Gonzalez Gallo, Governor of the State of Jalisco, Ex President Abelardo Rodriguez and Lic. Agustín García Lopez, Minister of Communications and Public Works, at the inaugural ceremony of the Guadalajara Airport.

## Communication Progress in Jalisco

By Stewart Morton

**T**HE population of Guadalajara, Capital of the State of Jalisco, received jubilantly the President of the Republic, Lic. Miguel Alemán, who visited this city during the first days of this month, accompanied by the Secretary of Communications and Public Works, Lic. Agustín García López, and other high officials of his government, in order to inaugurate various projects which have been terminated there by the federal and state governments.

The Chief Executive initiated his activities on the first day of this month with the inauguration of the modern airport which was projected and built by the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works. Considered as the best in the Republic, the new airport was designed and built in keeping with the most advanced technical features in this field of construction. Its amplitude and safety permit the fullest range of flying operation, for it provides a main track which is 2,200 meters in length and a secondary track of 1,800 meters, each 56 meters in width. It has, moreover, six additional tracks for taxiing operations, as well as a spacious parking platform for the aircraft. Ample space has been assigned for the hangars and for fuel stations and mechanical shops. The magnificent structure of the passenger station, covering an approximate area of 1,500 square meters, defines a veritable triumph of modern planning. It contains a spacious vestibule, which houses the ticket offices and booths of the different aviation companies, postal, telegraph and telephone services, shops, restaurants, etc. The control tower rising over the center of the building includes in its installations the departments for meteorological and radio services. Other buildings, such as those of the sub-station, the warehouse for machinery, etc., were built near the passenger station, forming in aggregate a perfect architectural unison. Additional pavilions, destined for mail transfer offices, radio installations for each of the aviation companies, and other services, are to be constructed soon.

The conclusion of the Guadalajara Airport project, which represented a cost of ten million pesos, defines a felicitous result of the effort which the administration of President Alemán is lending in its program of communication, and tends to facilitate the expansion of commercial air routes throughout the northwest section of Mexico and its air contact with the territory of the United States. The government of the State of Jalisco cooperated in the realization of this project by contributing the grounds upon which it was built as well as 200,000.00 pesos.

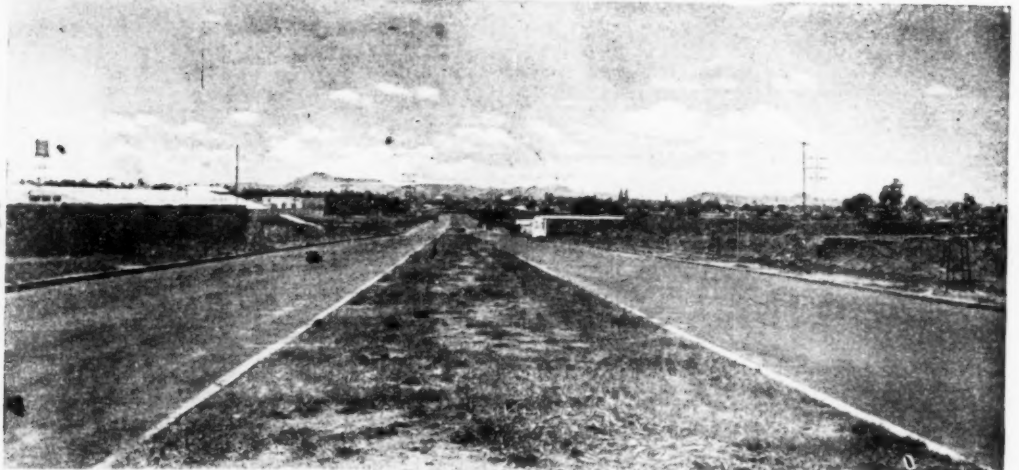
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The President of the Republic, Lic. Miguel Alemán, did not confine his activities to the inauguration of this important airport. During the following days he opened to traffic a vast network of highways, which was built by the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works in cooperation with the state government. This network comprises a total length of 693.8 kilometers, of which the following roads are of first class: 62.3 kilometers to Barra de Navidad; 2 to Resolana; 2 to Tacomates; 68 to Puerto Vallarta; 49 to Ciudad Guzmán; 48 to Chapala; 34 to La Barca; 126 to la Piedad; 68 to Teocaltiche; 5 to Mexicacán; 6 to Nochistlán; 3 to Apuleo; 27 to Colotlán; 9 to Valle de Juárez; 21 to Jocotepec, and 4.5 to Tonalá. The following roads comprise those of second class: 28 kilometers, Iztlahuacán—Guadalajara, 125, Talpa—Tomatlán, and 10, Capilla de Guadalupe—Santa María del Valle.

The work carried out during the period from 1947 to 1950 on the above outlined roads represented a cost of 55,859,332.84 pesos. Of this total sum the Federal Government provided the amount of 34,852,557.56 pesos, while the Government of the State of Jalisco contributed 21,006,775.38.



Main facade of the passenger station of the new airport at Guadalajara.



Section of the new road from Guadalajara to Chapala.

The progress achieved in highway construction by the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works in the State of Jalisco is defined in the following figures:

#### ROADS OF FIRST CLASS

Guadalajara—Barra de Navidad .....	62.3 Kms.
Road to Ixtapalapa .....	2.0 "
Guadalajara—Puerto Vallarta .....	68.0 "
Guadalajara—Ciudad Guzman .....	49.0 "
Guadalajara—Chapala .....	48.0 "
Guadalajara—La Barca .....	34.0 "
Zapotlanejo—La Piedad .....	126.0 "
Yahualica—Teocaltiche .....	68.0 "
Yahualica—Colotlán .....	27.0 "
El Tule—Vale de Juarez .....	9.0 "
Chapala—Jocotepec .....	21.0 "
Branch to Tonalá .....	4.5 "
Road to Tecomas .....	2.0 "
" " Mexicacán .....	5.0 "
" " Nochistlán .....	6.0 "
" " Apulco .....	3.0 "

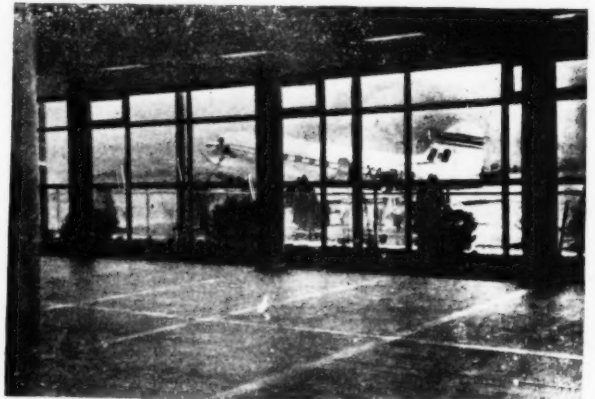
#### ROADS OF SECOND CLASS

Ixtlahuacán—Guadalajara .....	28.0 "
Talpa—Tomatlán .....	125.0 "
Capilla de Guadalupe—Sta. María del Valle .....	10.0 "
Total of kilometers built .....	697.8 Kms.

The work carried out in the construction of aforementioned roads during the period comprising the years 1947 to 1950

represents an expenditure of .....	\$ 55,859,332.84
of which amount the Federal Government apportioned .....	\$ 34,852,557.46
and the Government of the State of Jalisco .....	\$ 21,006,775.38

Section of the passenger station at the new Guadalajara Airport.



Radio-communication equipment installed in the control tower.





"Image of Mexico." Oil.

By J. Guerrero Galván.

## Four Modern Mexican Painters

By Guillermo Rivas

**T**HERE was a time, and not so very long ago, when mutual imitateness became so widely prevalent among our younger generation of painters that it actually defined a serious menace for the future of Mexican art. This standardization, evolved in the wake of the mural era, came to be known as the "Mexican school." Today, however, this term has lost its former significance. Time has imposed a severe test on the younger painters who followed in the footsteps of the mural masters, and only a counted few have survived this test.

Today the term Mexican school broadly signifies a national rather than an international concept and terminology of art, wherein each painter achieves his personal expression. The national concept, on the other hand, might be largely defined as realistic or objective rather than abstract or non-objective. There is yet another factor which commonly characterizes the art of our outstanding younger painters, and that is a preference for indigenous rather than universal themes. It is the rural Indian Mexico, and not the creole or mestizo Mexico of the cities, that for most of these painters serves as the dominant theme. But in depicting indigenous Mexico—which is undoubtedly an absorbing pictorial theme—there is no striving for exoticism or picturesqueness. It is the underlying human substance of the native race, and some times its impli-

cit social problem, which the best of our painters strive to depict, rather than its external oddity. But, as I have said, even in this community of subject matter each painter treats the theme from his respective viewpoint and in individual style.

\* \* \*

The current exhibit at the Galeria Arte Moderno of recent works by four outstanding Mexican painters—Raúl Anguiano, J. Guerrero Galván, Guillermo Meza and Juan Soriano—clearly illustrates this point. In aggregate these four painters authentically represent the Mexican school as it exists today. All four are products of the same aesthetic culture; all four are to a greater or lesser degree indebted in their manner or style to the masters of the mural era; all are genuinely modern Mexican; and yet the work of each is thoroughly dissimilar to that of the other three. Unmistakably national, it is the work of four creative artists of widely distinct personalities, each of whom has found his own way to fulfillment.

If in the aim of classification we should seek the salient quality in each man's work we will find that while Raúl Anguiano is naturalistic, J. Guerrero Galván is lyrical, Guillermo Meza dramatic and Juan Soriano romantic. Could there be a wider dissimilarity



"Motherhood." Oil.

By J. Guerrero Galván.

of temperaments or points of view? Indeed, it is this heterogeny of personal utterance, as defined in the work of these outstanding four painters, that lends an unebbing vitality to contemporary native art.

Raúl Anguiano, born 36 years ago in Guadalajara, Jalisco, received his preliminary instruction at the Escuela Libre de Pintura of his native city. He came to Mexico City in 1934 and joined the group which established the Taller de Grafica Popular. His work has been exhibited locally in more than ten one-man and group projections as well as in various group shows in New York, Habana, and sundry cities of Europe.

J. Guerrero Galván, native of Tonila, Jalisco, was born in 1910. He initiated his studies in Guadalajara, under the guidance of José Vizcarra, and shortly after his arrival in Mexico City 20 years ago, joined the group of young painters who were executing mural projects in various government schools.

"Fiesta for the Dead." Oil.

By Raul Anguiano.



"Sleeping Child." Casein Tempera.

By Juan Soriano.

His paintings have been exhibited numerous times in this city, and have been also shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Art Institute in Chicago, the Museum of Art in Philadelphia, the Wadsworth Museum of Science and Art in Toronto, and at various other American and European museums and galleries.

Guillermo Meza was born in this city in 1917 and obtained his early training at a night art school for workmen. Following his first public exhibit in 1942, he gained rapid recognition and has since then exposed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Art Museum of Cleveland, the Museum of Art in Philadelphia, the Chicago Art Institute, the Honolulu Art Museum, and the Royal National Gallery of Ottawa.

Juan Soriano was born in 1920 in Guadalajara, Jalisco and mastered his fundamentals in the studio of Reyes Ferreira. He arrived in Mexico City at the age of 15 and continued his formal training under the guidance of Santos Balmori and Emilio Caero. His work has been frequently shown in this city and has also figured in group exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the International Fair in San Francisco, and the Brooklyn Museum.



Portrait of Sra. Elisa M. del Moral. Oil.

By Raul Anguiano.

Portrait of a Little Girl. Oil.

By Raul Anguiano.



"The Village Sweetheart." Oil.

By J. Guerrero Galván.



"Bathers"

Oil.

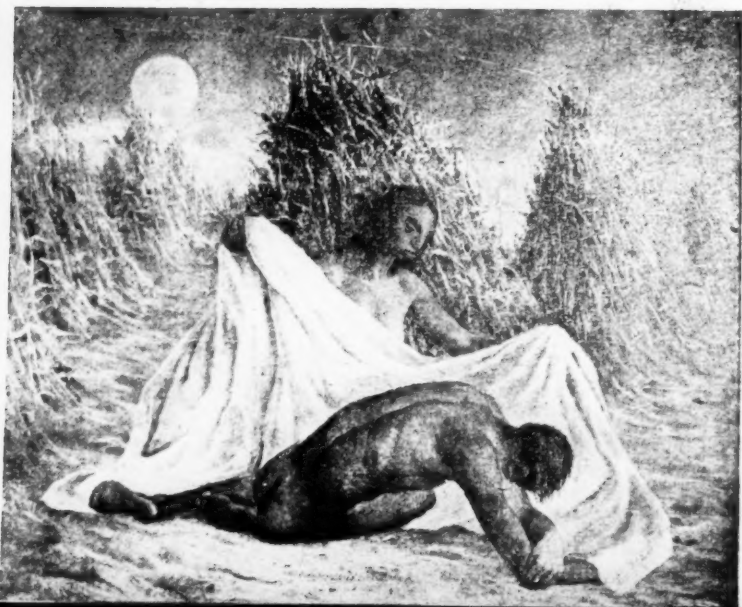
By Guillermo Meza.



"Portrait of the Sisters Mirachi"

Oil.

By Juan Soriano.



"At twilight"

Oil.

By Guillermo Meza.

# Un Poco de Todo

## ARGENTINA UNDER PERON

**A**RGENTINA was under "state of siege" for years until twenty-four hours before the election of February, 1946, and during that time no civil liberties existed. Meanwhile the Government was using the Treasury's money and the police to destroy the effectiveness of the opposition.

In more recent elections not a bit of honesty may be found, in any sense of the word. But even granting—very abstractly—that elections were honest (even though in their context they were by no means democratic), what is more significant, and not susceptible to abstract interpretation, are certain facts that many foreign observers seems to ignore.

In Argentina, since the arbitrary removal of the members of the Supreme Court in 1946, there does not exist an independent judicial system.

The only two members of the Senate who were elected in the balloting of February, 1946, and who did not belong to the official party, never were permitted to fill their posts.

The reform of the Fundamental Charter, undertaken last year despite the fact that the peronistas lacked the Congressional majority required in the Constitution, suppressed all the guarantees concerning private property rights.

The lack of an independent judicial power means that, in fact, individual liberties and guarantees do not exist. Hundreds of political and labor union leaders have been tortured and remain today in prison without the slightest possibility of being fairly tried under the puppet justices of the dictatorship.

The Labor party, which got the largest number of votes in the election of February, 1946, has been deprived of the right to participate in the balloting since the year 1948, and its president, Señor Cipriano Reyes, has been in prison since September, 1948, under the same false charge of plotting against the Government with the help of United States "imperialists." Representative Balbin, president of the Radical bloc of the Chamber of Deputies, has been in prison since last March under charges of "disrespect" to President Perón, and many other Congressmen and state representatives have been made destitute and jailed for criticizing the graft and totalitarian techniques of the Government.

Concerning three laws passed by a docile Congressional majority in September, 1950 "The New York Times" correspondent in Buenos Aires said: "The espionage bill is so drastic that the newspaper La Prensa has said it amounts to virtual intimidation of the general public"; a bill that channels vast but indefinite sums into the social welfare and charity monopoly run by the President's wife, and a bill that gives the Government complete control of the livestock industry."

On June 3, 1950, the Perón regime created the "School of Peronista Doctrine," with the purpose of "building a consciousness of Argentinism among the new generations," in order that "all the people may come to support it, on the basis of their indestructible faith in the unique leader."

As far as ideology is concerned, it will suffice to mention one example. The "Peronista Handbook" (Buenos Aires, 1948, official program of the govern-

ing clique), Section 41, Page 42, states: "In this country the only government that ever existed was a political one. We are taking the reins not only of the political government but of the social and economic government as well. We guide the three activities towards an integral government." And in Section 67, Page 51, the program says: "The first \*\*\* fundamental principle \*\*\* is to create a social economy to replace the present capitalist economy of exploitation. For that reason, we will convert the present economy at the service of capital into capital at the service of the economy."

Many of the so-called "merely authoritarian" regimes are, in fact, as totalitarian as Germany or Italy were in the days of Hitler and Mussolini. What happens is that they try to disguise their true totalitarian essence under the deceiving clothing of some would-be democratic appearances with the purpose of gaining the tolerance and even the goodwill of the democratic nations. But what should be our criterion—in judging or classifying the non-democratic systems—is the essence and not the external aspects of the different regimes.

## FOR BETTER INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS

In recent years the "Good Neighbor" policy has been generally accepted by the people of the United States. There is no longer much doubt that the development of good relations between North and South America is more essential today than ever. However, little is done through the schools of the United States to acquaint the children with the culture, people or history of Latin America. This is the conclusion reached in a 360-page study prepared by the Curriculum Service Bureau for International Studies, which shows that few schools have definite, planned programs of Latin-American studies.

Entitled "Inter-American Education in Our School," the study is designed to serve as a curriculum guide for supervisors and teachers. It is based on reports of the Inter-American Workshop Committee of the New York City schools.

According to the report, Latin America is considered in history classes only incidentally—as a phase of United States imperialism. In geography classes it is considered merely as a backward area that supplies our coffee, sugar, quinine or mahogany. As a matter of fact, the study holds that few teachers of social studies or languages have the necessary background to carry out successfully a program of Latin-American studies.

Classes in Spanish, the report adds, cover only literature, history and culture of Spain, although there are four times as many Spanish-speaking people in the Americas as there are in Spain, with a culture that is in many ways superior to Spain's. Portuguese is taught only in one New York City night school, where there is only one class. Even the universities and colleges in this city do not have courses in Portuguese.

Moreover, the charge is made that Spanish language instruction in the high schools is still based on college-entrance and Regents requirements instead of focusing attention on the ability to speak and read the language. There is a "shameful scarcity" of textbooks, maps, films, pamphlets and other materials on

Continued on page 66

# Literary Appraisals

**AGRICULTURAL REQUISITES IN LATIN AMERICA. Report of the Joint ECLA/FAO Working Party. Lake Success, New York. United Nations, Department of Economic Affairs, 1950. 156 pp.**

**I**N OCTOBER 1948 a mixed commission of experts from the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Food and Agriculture Organization was organized in Mexico City. Subsequently it visited all the Latin American countries, observing and gathering reports and statistical data in order to make an impartial analysis of the region's agricultural situation and the factors that have retarded increased production of food and raw materials in that vast area. The United Nations has now published the working party's report under the title, "Agricultural Requisites in Latin America."

One fact noted by the commission should be pointed out at once, since it explains many things that might seem inexplicable to a prosperous Iowa farmer or a wheat producer on one of Kansas' huge farms. It is that in the Latin American countries approximately 80 per cent of the population is devoted exclusively to agricultural work, and that this work is generally carried out in such a primitive and empirical manner, and under such adverse agronomical, climatological, and topographical conditions, that it might seem a true miracle that the meager agricultural yields were able to support so many millions of inhabitants for so many hundreds of years.

Of course, a marked individual underconsumption of food products can be pointed out in that region, along with great social problems derived from malnutrition and an embryonic stage of economic development resulting from the low purchasing power of the rural population. These phenomena, in turn, are reflected in feeble industrial development, despite the strong incentives to each country stemming from the lack of trade in industrial products during the last war.

The ECLA/FAO team does not analyze the problems peculiar to each country; rather, it groups the common problems in various chapters. Although involving the danger of generalization, this arrangement seems more logical and satisfactory for the purposes of the study than that of dealing with the exceptional cases individually.

One very interesting and important side of the question that the commission points out is the increasing population pressure in the Western Hemisphere. "In recent years," the report remarks, "the supply of food available for consumption in Latin America has increased, but there has also been a considerable increase of population." Food supplies in 1947-48 were 27 per cent above the average for the period 1934-38. But in the same length of time the population had gone up 24 per cent so that there was little improvement in the unsatisfactory food supply situation of the pre-war period.

This little volume sharply analyzes many of the basic factors that have impeded an increase in the rural production of the Latin American countries, and some of them will bear repetition here: (1) inadequate agricultural extension services to familiarize the farmers with the best production methods; (2) a lack of technical agricultural education at higher levels; (3) insufficient agricultural research; not enough knowledge of the fertilizer needs of different soil types, the adaptation of pesticides to local plagues, and of the

machinery needed considering the topography and type of work in different localities; (4) insufficient agricultural credit facilities; (5) the high cost of the equipment and materials the farmer needs to make his production technically efficient; (6) the shortage of foreign exchange, particularly of dollars; (7) the lack of good land transportation systems, particularly of rural roads and trunk rail lines.

Fortunately, the commission itself suggests general remedies for these obstacles, remedies that in most cases will have to come principally from the respective governments.

Another aspect the report goes into, and which promises great possibilities for improving the Latin American diet, is the development of the fishing industry. Except for Bolivia and Paraguay, all the Latin American countries have extensive coastlines where prosperous industries based on the products of the sea could be established.

To return to the question of agricultural production, however, in my opinion the commission skipped over one factor that is of vital importance, namely, the retarding influence on Latin American agriculture of the application of irrational cultivation practices, with the inevitable consequences in soil erosion. It is undeniable that bad cultivation practices, coupled with deforestation and overgrazing, have caused very serious damage to the soil, and since the effects of this process are cumulative and grow in geometric proportion, every day that passes without correcting this condition sees the lamentable effects of floods followed by periods of drought, the lowering of the underground water tables, the formation of gullies, and, eventually, the total disappearance of the arable soil.

Bearing in mind what the commission says about the excessive increase in Latin America's population, we find ourselves rapidly coming face to face with the equation Malthus formulated in the eighteenth century: while the elements for food production are decreasing, the population of the world continues to increase. In Latin America this phenomenon is still not so serious as in some parts of Asia, but it may reach a dangerous point if something is not done by these countries, individually and collectively, to check these dire trends.

G. B.

**ANATURALIST IN THE GRAN CHACO.** By Sir John Gaham Kerr. London and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1950. 229 p. illus.

**I**T WAS FORTUNATE for the natural sciences that a nineteen-year old medical student at the University of Edinburgh picked up a copy of Nature magazine at Waverley Station one wintry afternoon in 1889. In it, he read of an opportunity to explore Paraguay's Pilcomayo River as a member of an expedition headed by Captain Juan Page of the Argentine Navy. The young man, whose name was John Gaham Kerr, applied for the position, was accepted, and embarked upon a journey that determined his whole future.

"A Naturalist in the Gran Chaco" is the record of his travels and observations. Writing a day-to-day journal, a literary style popular with naturalists from Darwin to Gide, Graham Kerr frequently lays aside his diary to explain in detail, understandable to the general reader as well as the student, subjects of exceptional interest such as the daily life of the Natokoi Indians and the embryology of the lungfish. Flavored with exciting adventures along the way, the book

presents an over-all picture of a most unusual man making extraordinary scientific discoveries.

The geography of Paraguay offered a formidable challenge to anyone exploring its rivers and jungles during the years 1889-91. Most of the Chaco, that internationally disputed wilderness, was virtually unexplored by the white man. Inhabited by hostile Indians—actual redskins—its palmars, level grass-covered plains studded with fan palms; its montes, patches of intermittent forest on the open palmar; and its esteros, or vast stretches of swampland, were a virtual treasure house for the enterprising naturalist.

Graham Kerr takes the reader on a river-boat voyage from Buenos Aires up the rivers Paraná, Paraguay, and Bermejo. To reach Fortín Page on the narrow and hazardous Pileomayo, it was necessary to build a series of dams behind them to afford their ship, the Bolivia, sufficient water for navigation. En route, they encounter sickness and death. They face starvation. They are surrounded by poisonous insects and snakes as well as wild animals. Their crew mutinies, and the soldiers sent to protect them eventually formulate plans to murder them. This is adventure of a high order, but the reader, like the author, finds life more reassuring ashore than aboard that unfortunate craft.

In the midst of this excitement, Graham Kerr introduces the fascinating creatures inhabiting the Chaco: a bird that builds a nest with a domed roof and projecting eaves; the biscacha, a confident rodent resembling a wheelbarrow when running, who takes no nonsense from strangers; armadillos that literally swim through soil and run ballet-like on the tips of their toes; ants who cultivate underground mushroom beds; chickens that kill themselves with self-generated poison gas; ciéadas that sound "like the whistles of railway engines"; a wood-pecker with eyes in the front of its head rather than on the sides; a bush bird whose cry the Indians believe can set fire to their shelters and blankets; fish that eat whole oranges; fish that travel by jumping; fish that lay eggs on self-

made rafts—these and countless other fauna are vividly described by the author as the map of Paraguay suddenly comes alive with creatures never before imagined.

Of exceptional interest is Graham Kerr's comment on the Natakoi tribe with whom he lived and hunted on intimate terms. Surrounded by hostile savages, but peaceful enough themselves, these Chaco Indians have managed to survive in an extraordinarily primitive state despite constant guerrilla warfare. Their dress, tattoos, weapons, hunting methods, religion, ethics, education, social manners, sex habits, mathematics, gambling tendencies, their economics of "biological capital," and a number of other sociological manifestations are fully explained to the reader.


But perhaps the most outstanding material in the book is that contained in the second part, dealing with Graham Kerr's second visit to the Chaco in 1896-97 to investigate the embryology of the Lepidosiren or South American lungfish. Important because of its survival from an extremely early stage in the evolutionary history of the vertebrates, the lungfish is com-



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posed of cells so large that their chromosomes can easily be observed by students of heredity. With the help of missionaries and natives, therefore, the scientist set up a laboratory deep in the Chaco interior. There he determined that the hind limb of the burrow-inhabiting lungfish serves as a temporary breathing organ, that this same limb is a reversion to the rod-like member which was the first stage in the evolution of the leg of the vertebrates that move on land. In a fascinating revelation, as absorbing as any mystery story, Graham Kerr shows what the legs of land animals must have been like this in their beginnings. In addition, he indicates that the Lepidosiren changes color at night, that its teeth, separate at first for catching and holding prey, later develop into ridged plates to crush food rather than seize it.

These and many other facts hit the mark with all readers interested in evolution, who will find this book another milestone in man's attempt to understand himself and thereby conquer the animal in him.

W. B. A.

ASYLUM ISLAND. By Hilton Brown 955 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company.

THE island of Lassou, writes Hilton Brown in a foreword to his new novel, is an independent French-speaking Caribbean state "not easily found in the atlas." Since the Liberator Bouffallon threw off the Napoleonic yoke in 1813, Lassou's two political parties—the Negro and the Mulatto—have furnished her with sixty-three Chief Executives, twenty-seven of whom have been murdered in office. From the latest assassination and its scrambled aftermath, Mr. Brown has fashioned a confusing study of confused loyalties—and a mild satire which depends for most of its watery humor on the charming corruptibility of the islanders.

By Lassou law the murdered Consul's mantle should have fallen to his dull but decent son, Téléma-

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que. At least Télémaque's Scottish tutor, Strathdee, proposed to make it happen so, for the good of the islanders. Two obstacles threatened Strathdee's design: first, a fascist-minded political glamour boy named Florian; second, Télémaque's failure to locate a certain politico-religious object known simply as The Thing. Local voodoo lore insisted that no Negro could rule Lassou unless he possessed The Thing.

"And what is The Thing?" you ask breathlessly, along with millions of juke-box clients. Well, Lassou's "Thing" turns out to be a curiously wrought rum bottle containing the soul of the Liberator Bouffallon. Which is the most plausible answer I've heard yet—and saves Mr. Brown the ignominy of being shut out.

R. M.

**DANCING DIPLOMATS.** By Hank and Dot Kelly. Foreword by Oliver LaFarge. 254. pp. Albuquerque. University of New Mexico, Press.

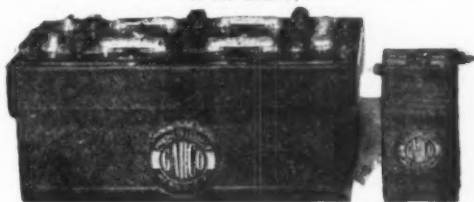
THE profession of letters and that of diplomacy find in some people a natural affinity. Gabriela Mistral, Paul Claudel, St. John Perse, Claude Bowers and John Hay are only a few of those giving witness to the compatibility of the two. Both professions require understanding, compassion, discipline and unusual powers of perception and evaluation. So that this unpretentious and winning account of two years spent by a young American vice consul and his wife in Peruvian Amazonia is in a long and honorable tradition.

Iquitos, Peru, is one of the remote locales the distorted economy of a world war suddenly made important. Once almost a world capital for the wild rubber industry, Iquitos had lapsed into obscurity as the

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cultivation of rubber plantations in British colonies made the gathering of wild rubber unprofitable. With most of these plantations in enemy hands during World War II, the wild rubber potential of the Amazon basin again became important. Iquitos was also a center for mahogany and the barbasco root from which its rotenone is derived.

Mr. Kelly's duty as the American vice consul in Iquitos was to facilitate the movement of these strategic materials and to win and maintain the goodwill of the population of the region. Colloquial, unhealthy, largely cut off from the world, Iquitos required of the Americans placed there as a result of the war a high degree of adaptability and perseverance. The Kellys found that a sense of humor helped, too, and their account of the local flora and fauna, of the hard-dancing Iquitiños and the lonely life of the garrisons scattered along the obscure Ecuador-Peru boundary has its share of laughs.

All those alarmed or pleased over the increasing tendency of the United States to police, order, improve, enlighten or feed various backward parts of the world will find further ground for their emotions in the Kellys' book. The account of how the United States Air Forces mapped the disputed Ecuador-Peru boundary, and of how American agencies insisted that certain minimum standards of health and treatment prevail among the rubber gatherers, is here in sufficient detail to remind anyone who needs reminding that we have a world mission likely to last a long time. It is sad to learn that Kelly was killed after a return to his home in New Mexico. The times demand American consuls of unusual quality. Kelly must have been a good one.

Continued on page 49

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# Current Attractions

## SYMPHONY

By Vane C. Dalton

IN THE realm of symphony music, what with the very successful season by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Mexico City now running its course at the Palacio Chino, and the forthcoming season by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, we seem to be turning in a jump from a protracted period of scarcity to that of sudden plethora. For the first time in our memory we are to have two symphony orchestras offering by-weekly concerts, and partly on corresponding dates, performing simultaneously, and one might even say competitively, in our midst. For while the season of twenty-four concerts by the Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sergiu Celibidache, was initiated last month and is to extend to the end of April, the National Symphony Orchestra season will open on Friday, March 9th and will continue through the ensuing six weeks. Thus, at least as regards quantity, our music-bent public will have no cause for complaint.

The announced return of Carlos Chavez to the podium as guest conductor during the season of the National Symphony, alternating with Leonard Bernstein, lends a somewhat spectacular aspect to the occasion. Chavez resigned his post as director of the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico in 1949, at the same time officially disbanding this orchestra. Having created it in 1928, he conducted this orchestra throughout twenty-one years of brilliant achievement. Performing at first at the Teatro Esperanza Iris, later at the Teatro Arben and the old auditorium of the Teatro Hidalgo, and finally assuming its fitting place at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, this ensemble grew and matured under his able guidance, developing a local musical environment and a wide and loyal following which, of course, could not disappear with his retirement or its disbanding.

The orchestra, in fact, did not disappear. Ceasing to function as an independent enterprise maintained by the proceeds from the boxoffice and subsidies from a small group of benevolent patrons, as regards most of its components, it emerged shortly afterwards as an official organization under the title of National Sym-

phony Orchestra, a dependency of the National Institute of Fine Arts. Carlos Chavez, meanwhile, had been appointed to head this institute. Conducted by José Pablo Moncayo, a young and gifted composer and disciple of Carlos Chavez, the theoretically new orchestra achieved considerable progress during the foregone two years; though as regards public support it can be hardly said that it has been able thus far to actually replace the ensemble which grew up and matured with its founder. The name and personality of Carlos Chavez were indeed not only inseparably bound with this orchestra—they were inseparably bound with the musical era it developed throughout the two decades of its existence.

In order to appraise this orchestra's achievement in stimulating musical appreciation in this city it is well to recall that prior to its founding symphony music was in Mexico almost a forgotten art. In 1949, when this orchestra was disbanded, its repertoire comprised the monumental volume of 485 works, of which 237 had been played here for the initial time. All the great composers, old and modern, as well as all the

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## Art and Personal Notes

THE National Museum of History in the Chapultepec Castle is presenting throughout the current month an exposition of paintings, drawings and lithographs by José Clemente Orozco which comprise the private collection of Dr. Alvar Carrillo Gil. Titled "The Mexican Revolution," this exhibit includes some of the finest examples of the great muralist's work.

Orozco, who collaborated as illustrator on the staff of revolutionary periodicals, eyewitnessed many gruesome episodes of the civil war, and this experience has exerted a profound influence on the future development of his art. His tragic concept of life and the philosophy of chaos which have lent such intensely dramatic force to his mural painting, were developed during the years of revolutionary strife. And it was through this concept and philosophy that Orozco evolved his unique aesthetic idiom, the peculiar technique and style and the extraordinary expressiveness which have identified him as one of the greatest painters of our age.

Many of us would like to see a truly comprehensive posthumous exhibit of this genial painter, and we hope that it will be presented some day. For the time being, however, the exhibit of the Carrillo Gil collection, presenting but a partial panorama, is decidedly worth seeing.

ONE of the most impressive exhibitions of its kind we have seen hereabouts in quite a long time was the group of eight portraits by the young Mexican painter Eduardo Rangel offered last month at the Galeria Arte Moderno (Plaza Santos Degollado 16-C). This exhibition amply demonstrated that portraiture,

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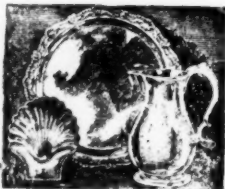
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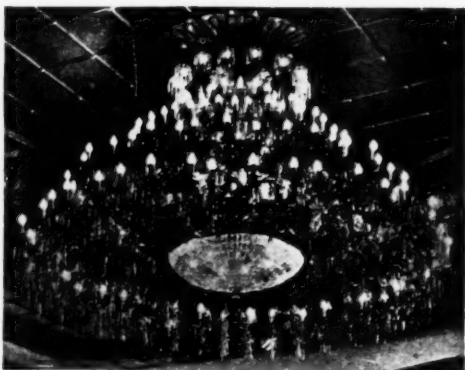
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defining as it does in his case good likeness, penetrating character study as well as bold plastic venturesomeness, can still be the means of a vital creative expression.

**D**URING the course of this month, the above gallery is presenting a group exhibit of newer works by the four outstanding Mexican painters: Raúl Anguiano, J. Guerrero Galván, Guillermo Meza and Juan Soriano.

**S**PONSORED by the Governor of the State of Guerrero, Gen. Baltasar Leyva Mancilla, the versatile painter Roberto Cueva del Río executed a large portable mural panel, titled "The Resurrection of Cuauhtemotc," which will decorate the central patio of the state government palace at Chilpancingo, Guerrero.

Combining painting with details of sculptured bas relief, this panel symbolically develops the theme of Cuauhtemotc's martyrdom and his subsequent role in the forging of Mexico's national concept. Over a background of Mexico's national colors, the mural depicts the Aztec Prince emerging from the flames beyond and above an enormous eagle which is destroying a serpent.

The panel was presented before a group of invited guests by Governor Leyva Mancilla at a special ceremony held in the garden of the Posada del Sol building.

**A** COLLECTIVE show of paintings, prints and sculpture, chosen from the best work by pupils of the National School of Plastic Arts (San Carlos Academy) is being offered at this time in the premises of this school.

**C**LARDECOR GALLERIES (Paseo de la Reforma No. 226) are currently showing a quite interesting group of paintings by the local artist Emilio Baz. While the work of this gifted painter has frequently figured in group exhibits, this is his first one-man show.

**I**N KEEPING with its policy to introduce the work of our younger talents, the art gallery of Biblioteca Nacional (Corner of Avenida Uruguay and Isabel la Católica) is showing at this time paintings in oil by Alejo Jacobo and Raúl Flores and sculpture in terra cotta by Marco Laveon. All three of these artists are graduates of the School of Painting and Sculpture of the Secretariat of Public Education.

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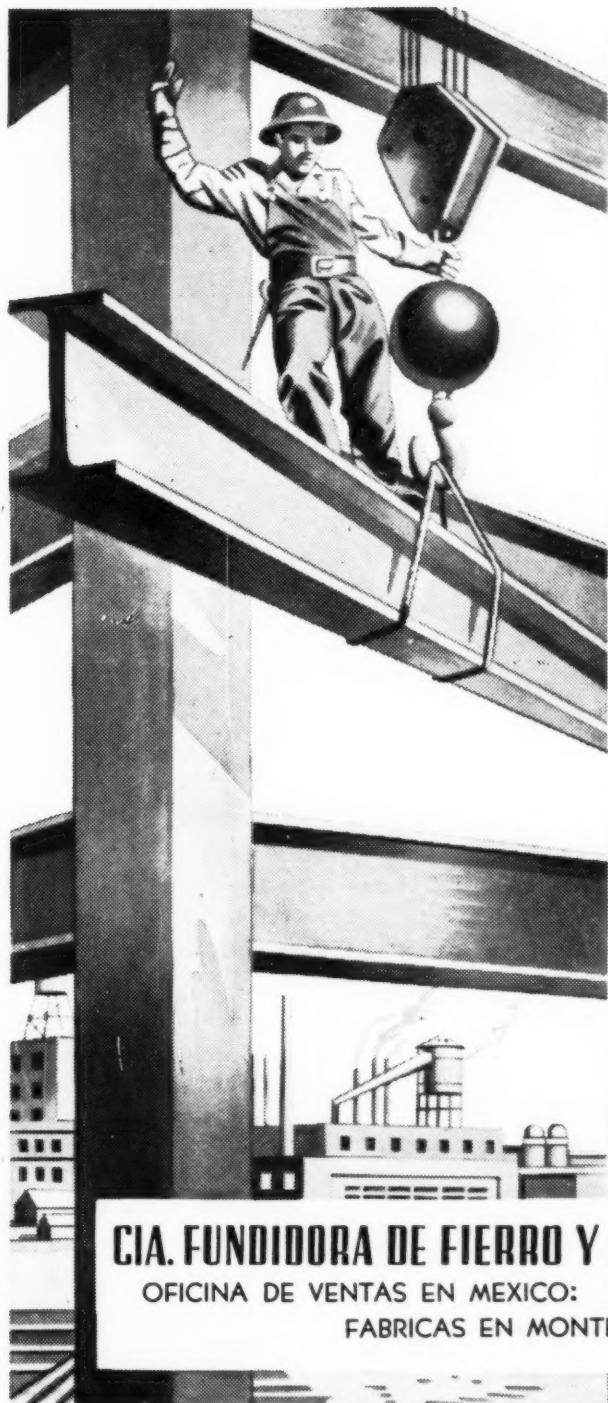
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**Patterns of an Old City . . .**

Continued from page 17

integrity. And yet this integrity was cast of dual elements which were in inherent contradiction.

Mysticism can sustain the courage and forbearance of the humble; it can illumine the soaring vision of a poet; it can feed the zeal of an innocuous fanatic; but when mysticism is combined with a capacity for action it can become a perilous thing. The tragedy of don Artemio's life could be attributed to the fact that his nature combined the contradictory qualities of a mystic and a man of action. He had accepted with a blind dedication the precepts and norms of an existence handed down from his forefathers as absolute and inviolable, and when time assailed these precepts and norms he defended them as one might defend life itself.

\* \* \*

Don Artemio's remote ancestor came to Mexico bearing armour and wielding a sword, bringing with him the creed of power as the purpose of life, the concept that man is not the product of time but that man plus power can subjugate time. And throughout generations this concept had remained unchallenged. A farflung domain extending over many leagues, from the timbered slopes of Sierra Madre, over verdant valleys and desert wastes, was ruled by a breed of men who had never known defeat, who had retained their power as a birthright, as an unassailable heritage.

The pattern for this rule was traced in mediaeval ages, when humanity was largely a complex of masters and slaves, and it was transplanted to these lands of America and became firmly rooted on this soil because the conquered race was in majority and the permanence of the conquest depended upon its total and lasting subjugation. Thus the ownership of land became the synonym for power.

Don Artemio's ancestors had ruled these lands and enjoyed the power it gave them, governed by cer-

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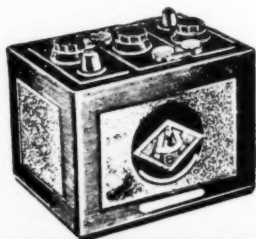
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tain self-imposed rules, by a stern code of conduct, which was that of beneficent despots. And the peons, the men who tilled the soil and looked after the herds, never envied their masters' power; in their grim poverty and utter powerlessness they were elementally happy. The order prevailed without a specific ethical structure. It functioned evenly, without slightest disturbance, throughout succeeding generations as a fixed tradition, as an inalterable way of life.

Perhaps there were times through the course of years when this way of life degenerated for the masters into a mere *modus vivendi*, based on the simple mathematical tabulation of a thirty-centavo daily wage multiplied by so many head of peons of whom each produced a peso in average daily toil. And pesos then were large and heavy silver coins. They sufficed for the upkeep of the fortress-like manor on the hacienda and the sumptuous house in the city, stuffed with heirlooms, bibelots and antiques, for Arab stallions and fighting bulls, for imported tutors and coachmen, for journeys to Paris, to Rome and Madrid. Time, held captive within the power of such masters, moved at an imperceptible pace: life was a rhythmically reiterated cycle.

It was by the time the great estate finally passed to the ownership of don Artemio that the static centuries abruptly came to an end and time reasserted its primordial power over the destiny of man. As if almost from nowhere a new breed of conquering men emerged in the land. Sparks of rebellion kindled a blaze that spread like a prairie fire, and the boundaries of don Artemio's domain became gravely imperiled. It was then, I suppose, that the mystic and the man of action attained in him a perfect unity.

His way of life, confronted by this challenge, became a creed; his action now defined an applied philosophy. He saw in what happened only a grave misfortune, like a plague of locusts or an epidemic of pox; but he surmised that to combat this plague he needed an effective method, a reaffirmation of a militant creed. The country, he believed, had succumbed to a

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collective psychosis, nourished by the tragic delusion of freedom. Men, like the bees or ants, were born to be either masters or slaves, and to rebel against this mandate of nature was to defy the will of God. Can the word freedom, now the tool of mercenary demagogues, be reduced to a tangible premise? Man lifts his weary eyes from the earth, the good sod which feeds him at the price of a sweated brow, and looks at the birds aflight in the sky, and he envies their freedom. But he fails to perceive that this apparently joyous and untrammelled flight defines a bitter struggle for existence—the endless task of pursuing food, or of seeking the shelter of a tree that might provide safety from a hawk or an owl, or of a mate and a nest and procreation... He fails to perceive that unremitting bondage is implicit in this apparent freedom, that the sole freedom existence vouchsafes man is the freedom to struggle for its preservation.

It was the time to set up barriers, to quarantine his domain from the spreading moral plague. He could not combat the evil forces which raged at large, but he could isolate his own frontiers, render them impregnable, not by sheer force but by an appeal to reason, by arousing in the hearts and minds of his people a sense of destiny as a thing inseparable from his will, to awaken in them a sense of the infinite stemming from love and faith and self-abnegation.

He alone knew what was best for his people. Grasping the meaning of infinity, perceiving the vulnerability of human kind, he knew when it was imperative to be ruthless and cruel for the sake of compassionate understanding. A wise patriarch, a master in his house, he beheld his people as his children whom he had to guide and protect from their inherent evils and external perils. A ruler's supremacy, he surmised, could not be justified by mere physical possession of property, by the tenure of the land or of the sustenance source of those whom he ruled: such supremacy had to be justified by moral possession, by a complete and unquestioning acquiescence springing from a profound spiritual affinity between the ruler and the ruled.



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Thus don Artemio emerged as a sort of philosophical tyrant, with what he believed to be a God-inspired philosophy. He perceived that love is the transcending force of life and that all men are bound in a mystical unity, and he sought to impart this perception to his people. He sought to implant these things in the hearts of men and to make of them a code of daily conduct in an age of dire common menace. He taught them his concepts of freedom and equality, denying the ultimate existence of both, stressing that instead of striving for unattainable equality a man should seek the place which is rightfully his, and that instead of freedom he should seek duty, dedication and discipline, and that in defining these goals in his own conscience, he should be willing to give his life in their defense, or to expend it for something greater than himself.

He made them see that no man is exempt from duty, and that the primary duty of a ruler was to teach the men he rules the veritable meaning of existence, the veritable importance of the pattern of life, to define the substance of this pattern and to make of it a law.

So great was his zeal, so adroit was he in his hazardous leadership, that for years his domain, like a cliffbound isle in a stormy sea, seemed invulnerable. Everywhere throughout the country the hacendados were being dislodged from their seats and their estates were parcelled out to the peons. But don Artemio's peons had no designs on his lands. Firmly bound by the mystique their master implanted among them, they viewed the encroaching new order with hostility, turning a deaf ear to propagandists who ventured into their territory, resolutely warding off any incursion from the outside. When all the country around them was in the hands of the "agrarristas," and the estate, defiantly preserving the status quo, became like a fortress in siege, they defended it loyally—they fought off their liberators in order to preserve their serfdom—even at the sacrifice of blood.

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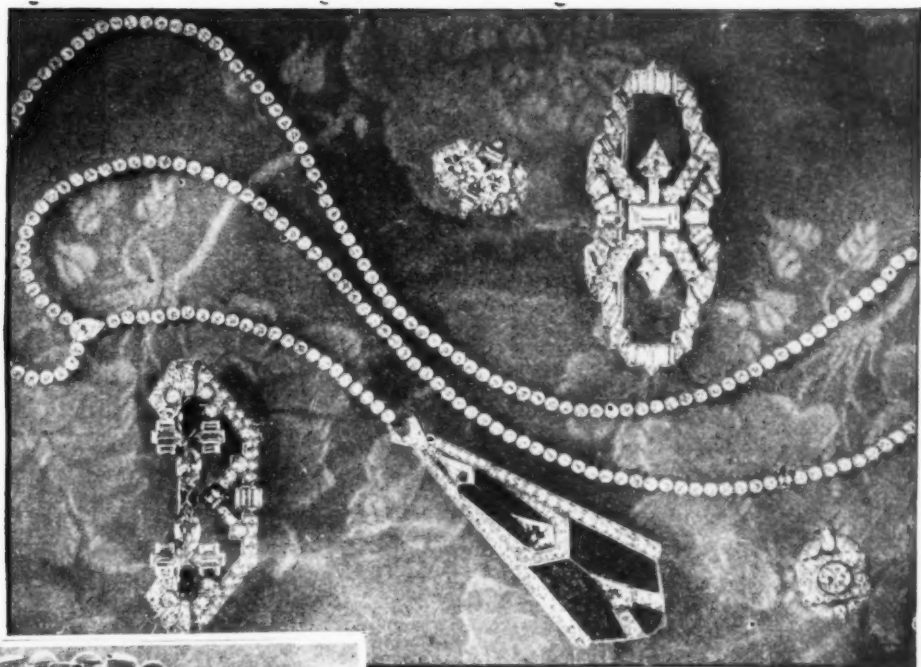
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major despots who elsewhere in the world likewise evolved a new religious dogma as the basis for totalitarian rule, yet withal, upon a smaller scale don Artemio's regime bore a close resemblance to theirs. What in the vocabulary of modern politics would sound like the grimmest authoritarianism, presented in the lofty diction of his mystique, seemed to suggest the utterances of an inspired prophet.

And as remotely apart as I was from him, I found it fascinating to hear him talk—to observe the strange brightness transfigure his ancient face as he spoke calmly, without vehemence, without bitterness or grudge, as if unwinding a daydream, of his long and valiant battle and final defeat. And even though he acknowledged his material defeat he defined it as a spiritual triumph. For his people had never betrayed him. To the very end he was their leader and teacher whose command they blindly obeyed; though they were compelled of course to give up when the soldiers marched in. The absolute laws he implanted among them were finally swept aside by the laws of a superior force; and yet, despite his capitulation and submissive retirement to a contemplative life, I am sure that he believed to his dying day that he had been divinely right.

• • •

When I mentioned to my casual friends that the amontillado we were drinking brought to my memory a man who had actually achieved the feat of arresting time, they probably thought that my remark was too bizarre or quite irrelevant, for they revealed no curiosity about it, and our talk rambled on along its amiable and aimless course.

### Literary Appraisals . . .

Continued from page 36

**HOME IS AN ISLAND.** By Alfred Lewis. 320 p. p New York: Random House.

VEN in the Azores, children dream of going to America to see what it is like. José's father had spent several years searching for gold in California, and the nostalgic accounts he gave of life on the

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West Coast stirred deeply the spirit of adventure in the restless boy.

Senhora de Castro, however, felt that José's disposition was peculiarly suited for the clergy, and she hoped that some day he would take the vows. Progressive-minded as she was, Senhora de Castro thought it inadvisable to impose a vocation upon her son. She regarded it as her primary duty to condition him to live in the light of Christian ethics. Thus, at an early age, José learned about the beauty of heaven as contrasted with the nightmare of hell. But he could not reconcile his wanderlust and desire for sensuous gratification with the ascetic existence that the life of a clergyman suggested to him.

In spite of his mother's entreaties and Father Corvelo's saintly precepts, José remained hesitant. It was comely Maria who convinced him that he was not of the sort to enter the clergy. Yielding without difficulty, José decided to sail to America for a brief sojourn and return to the island where she would be waiting for him.

What "Home Is an Island" lacks in substance is somewhat compensated for by the quality of the narrative. Lewis' style is most refreshing. Some of his descriptive passages, in their pellucid simplicity and rich imagery, ring with the lyricism of poetry. Yet whether this is enough to offset a skeletal content is highly questionable.

### The Day Begins at Four . . .

Continued from page 20

The government of Yucatan leans strongly toward socialism, and for political if not ethical reasons the Indian population, which greatly outnumbers their present rulers, has many privileges and a measure of judicial protection. But I think my companions are careful as a matter of instinctive consideration, in keeping with a high standard of sportsmanship.

On Sundays and holidays, outside of large cities, the Indians all carry crude single-barrel, hammer shot-guns. Most of them are poor marksmen, but they are keen naturalists and so stealthily they manage to approach their quarry and fire point blank. Shells are too expensive to be wasted. They seldom kill quail unless they can pot a big bevy huddled on the ground.

Quail of the Yucatan peninsula are just like ours of Virginia, except the male has a black throat, instead of brown, and both sexes are slightly smaller.

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But just when you are ready to give up in disgust Sport goes to work with vim and dash, head up and tail slashing; he catches a whiff of a bevy, swings into the wind at a full right angle, moves faster and then, with the suddenness of four-wheel brakes, is on point, his sinewy body distended, and from the tip of his tail to the quivering nostrils he says that the birds are square in front of him. You come up, walk ahead of him and flush the quail. You swing right and left for a surprising but none the less gratifying double, and order "fetch." In a twinkling two brown beauties are in your hands and all that transpired earlier in the day has been effaced.

When we arrived at the far end of the eight hundred acres of quail fairyland our game bags were full and our water depleted so the sight of three saddled horses to take us to the casa grande was indeed welcome. We trotted along beside the rails of a narrow mule-car track for a good mile and passed through a massive gateway up to the house. On the wide veranda stood a white haired smiling Don, immaculately clad in spotless linen and highly polished boots. In courtly fashion he acknowledged my introduction with, "Mucho gusto, señor. Aquí tiene usted su casa," which is to say, "Delighted. This is your house."

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### Great-Great-Granddaughter . . .

Continued from page 16

burst into song and then the gray sinsontli outdid the yellow birds in volume and sweetness.

Admiration came very easily. When Thérèse stood silently remarking an ancient lacquer bowl, the old lady nodded and murmured, "Trabajan con cariño." She meant that the persons who had made all these things worked with affection. The joy of creation was a veritable trademark of authenticity. In each piece there seemed to be a harmonious marriage of utility and beauty, of necessity and grace.

Looking at the mestizo faces of the mother and daughter and the taste of their kitchen and the wares of daily use, it occurred to me how agreeable, after all, was the fusion of the Spanish with the Indian. Whatever had been introduced from Spain had taken on a Mexican flavor. And Spain had given so much more to the Mexican heritage than most commentators seem willing to admit. The Indians had learned glass-blowing and leatherwork from the Spaniards. They had not known an upright loom until the Spaniards came. They had never seen a potter's wheel. They had no wool, no iron, no steel. Of course, before the arrival of the Europeans they already possessed the materials, the eyes, and the aptitude to do wonders with precious stones and with hummingbird feathers, and the secrets of lacquer were well known to those who lived along the Pacific coast. The Indians were natural artisans who would produce something worth while if allowed to work leisurely, and they have never been the absolute imitators the Chinese artisans can be today. They transform their models into shapes closer to their own heart's desire. The Indian imprint seems invariably left on every adoption from the Spanish.

As Thérèse called our attention to a platter decorated inside and out with stylized deer and wild flowers, the proprietress began to believe in our sincerity and thawed. "Done with affection—" she echoed her mother—" as I see you do observe."

"Here, it must be like working in the Garden of Eden," Wagus said, glancing toward the patio.

The proprietress smiled. "Yes, for the pure joy of working, and of course for the livelihood—but without serpents—or men." She laughed as Paxinou laughed for Pilar. "But in Mexico we don't distort production into an ideal of existence, as we hear Americans do. Craft-work is not labor in the American sense, but pleasure."

"And when the work is enjoyed, as it is here, the worker is more than doubly paid," Hoagland said sentimentally, but meaning it.



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She looked as if such a sentiment seemed strange indeed coming from an American.

"How long can you keep it up?" I asked. "Your way of producing art?"

The woman suddenly seemed to lose her arrogance in her speculation of the future. "Who can say? As the world seems to be going—the way of man with a machine can change overnight, as the way of man changes within a generation. With the demand for more and more production—particularly the demand from your countrymen—even Mexicans, who should know better, are turning from art to shoddy."

We offered no defense, for we had seen enough of the recent wholesale buying in Mexico to realize the menace. We began making our adioses. The old lady, as well as her daughter, accompanied us through the patio to the street door. The daughter continued the train of thought we had started her on.

"I do not even know if I shall keep this house after my mother's passing. And I do not much care. I went into business so that she might continue to live out her life in her own house, which had come to her through her ancestors."

I turned to the old lady. "So this is your house? You are really la propietaria?"

La Señora de la This de la That nodded her head, straightened her bent neck, and visibly became several inches taller. "Sí, señor," she said gravely. "Yo soy la propietaria."

The five of us shook hands with the two of them. As I raised the old lady's wrinkled dry hand to my lips, I caught an exchange of glances between the daughter and Señor Sánchez. It was not about the hand-kissing. I think it concerned a commission on sales.

Driving away, I wondered about the commonwealth of the future in Mexico. What could it be?

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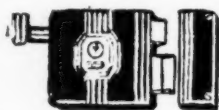
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Obviously not white. Not predominantly Indian, either. The pure whites in Mexico would disappear with the centuries, the pure Indians would disappear. Mexico was to be a mestizo country, with the blood of one race saying one thing and the blood of another race saying something different. The fusion would vary in each man—sometimes the best elements would surge to the top, sometimes the worst. There was bound to be some secret warfare going on within breasts, which might occasionally break out in neurotic paralysis or violent action.

In the last hundred years it was obvious how the significance of the mestizo had increased. It was only necessary to thumb through the histories to realize how many heroes, leaders, artists, the mestizos had furnished the commonwealth. One thing was certain: One should have only sympathy with the Mexican for his problem in reconciling racial values at odds with each other.

At the edge of town Señor Sánchez turned into the new automobile road that winds among boulders high to a belvedere on the Cerro del Estribo. Much of the way looked raw and red from the wounds of recent construction work, but wild flowers and new soft grasses did what they could to hide the scars. Before the belvedere a spacious terrace spread itself in a half-circle to the edge of a precipice. Far beneath, the lake lay tranquil in the apricot light of late afternoon. In the outlines of the hills and the mountains, there was again that striking similitude to a Japanese print, where everything is sharply defined and nothing is superfluous to the composition. Directly across was the island of Janitzio in miniature, its white statue no larger now than a heroic ivory chessman. The sun had just disappeared behind the flame-tinted rim of the west. Birds made their last daytime communications as the evening came on delicately, like music from muted strings. The water of the lake turned to the color of moonstone. A single boat glided across its surface like a black-enameled beetle creeping on satin damask.

The bell from the great church began to ring, sending a faint silvery music out over the lake and up the hills and down the hills.

When the overtones and the echoes merged into the twilight, we prepared to leave. At the fringes of Pátzcuaro, Indians squatting before their huts took on the atmosphere of evening, and their faces and clothes blurred against the adobe walls. Indians are lonesome-looking people, even when several are gathered together. There is an inherent brooding quality about them. But in a phrase of Steinbeck, they do not "carry little clouds of apprehension about them, as American bankers do." Without the nervous restlessness

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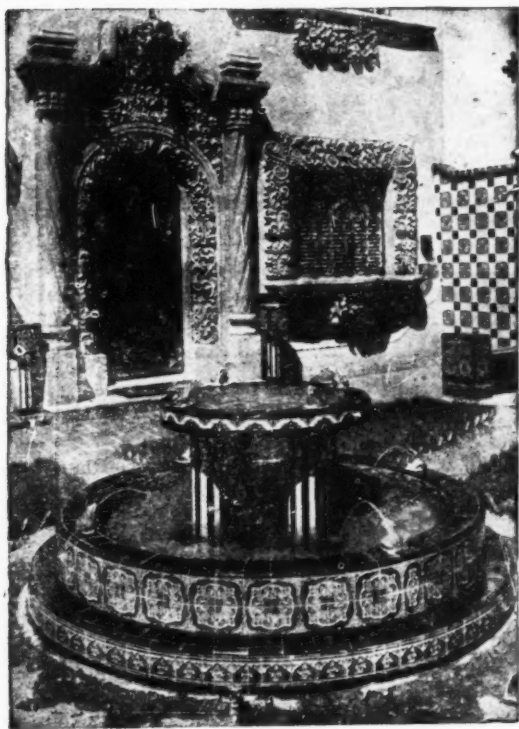
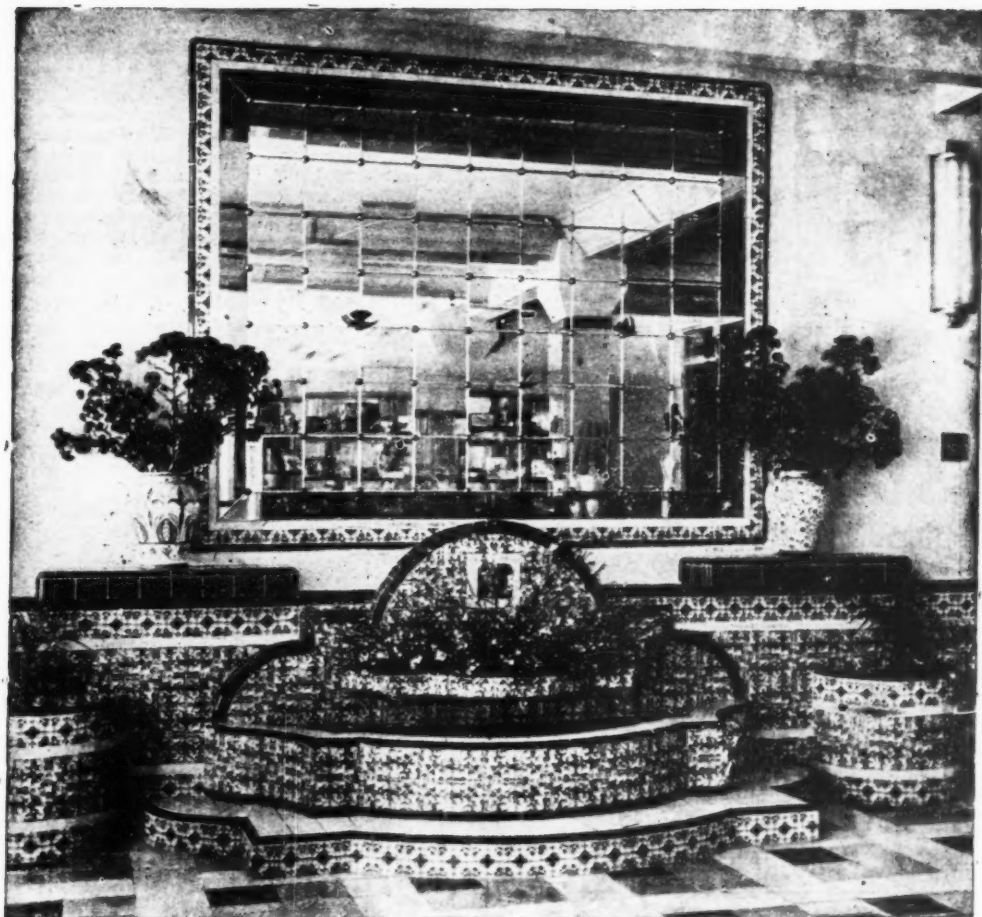
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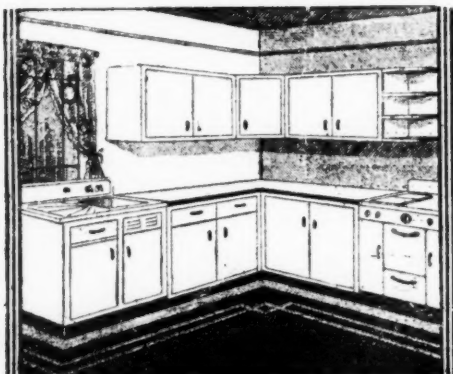
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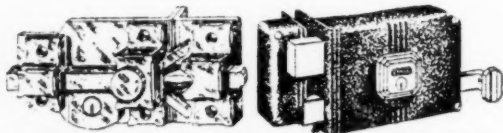
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of ambition, they would sleep well, with good digestions of their rude and simple fare. Relaxed, they breathed in the cooling air of evening, and then began going within doors, seemingly with quiet hearts and minds untouched by the turmoil of the great outer world. At a corner where our car turned into the road that led to the Vaseo de Quiroga, two Indian youths were entertaining a group by singing a corrido, a folk song, in a minor key. It was about a man who never more knew happiness after he foreswore his rural upbringing for the city's glittering fleshpots.

I thought of Thoreau and his own computation of his blessings. "I am staided that God can make me so rich," he wrote, "even with my own cheap stores. It needs but a few wisps of straw in the sun, some small word dropped, or that has lain long silent in some books." In one respect these people who had little or no profit from words in a printed book went even beyond Thoreau. In the book of nature they instinctively knew something that Thoreau had to learn the hard way, by renouncing civilization.

## Morelos . . .

Continued from page 10

and half destroyed, its population was cut from twenty thousand to three thousand, largely due to the barbaric cruelty of the Spanish commander Trujillo, sent to root out the rebels.

We visited the birthplace of Morelos, on the Calle de Morelos in the City of Morelos, and were astonished to find it a fine mansion. We had understood that Morelos was the son of a poor carpenter living in a squalid section of the town. True, they informed us, it so happened that the Señora Doña Juana Payon was surprised in the pangs of childbirth while passing this house and was brought in, where she bore the future Liberator! The inscription on the doorway reads: "Illustrious Morelos! Immortal Hero! In this house, honored by thy presence, the grateful people of Morelia salute you!" This house is now a museum, and a shrine of the nation comparable in terms of politics to that of Guadalupe in religion.

Not so far distant, on the Calle de Iturbide, I discovered an inscription: "Agustín de Iturbide, Liberator of Mexico, was born in this house, Sept. 27, 1787." It says nothing about his being Iturbide. First Emperor of Mexico, the first also of a long line of counter-revolutionists, who practically nullified temporarily all the aims for which Morelos gave his life, and who would have duplicated Spain's record of tyranny, had not a counter-counter-revolution brought to the fore a



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still greater usurper of tyrannical power, Santa Anna. This memorializing of the tyrant Iturbide in Morelos' town has no doubt been subject to many a wrangle. And finally—I found no inscription—Lazaro Cardenas dwelt in this town and ruled this state of Michoacan, as its governor, until he was elected President of the Republic, in 1934.

I recall still another Morelia, seen in a totally different mood and tempo. It was on the distempered occasion of my first visit to his capital of Michoacan. For the past twelve hours I had been the motor guest of a Mexico City official, his wife and small boy, Pancho. We had set out from La Capital on All Saints' Eve, to spend the brace of Holy Days. Although officially well into the "dry season," it was still raining hard after several days, and all through the afternoon and the black night that followed we plowed our way into the nests of gorgeous mountains and dangerous passes, arriving within sight of Morelia sometime past midnight, ravenously hungry and nervously tired to the point of exhaustion. Fortunately, we had engaged our rooms ahead.

The city was both impressive and majestic, I thought, with a lacquer sheen of still-falling rain polishing pavement and palaces, the long row of globular street lamps glimmeringly reflected, the towers of the cathedral and other churches disappearing into the murky canopy of the night. My verdict was, "Charming!" right up to the moment of our arrival in front of our Hotel Grande. It was closed as tight as a drum, Spanish style, as indeed was the entire city, which we had scarcely noticed in our tired ecstacy. Every colonial house in New Spain was built like a medieval castle, for very excellent military reasons not to be too lightly disregarded even in this day. Huge spike-studded doors were swung to at a given hour and secured by crossbars and wrought-iron pins. Pres-

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to! The world was effectually shut out and kept out for the rest of the night. Blows, entreaties, curses availed one little. We tried them all. Our assault was interrupted by the intervention of the sereno. The sereno was another survival of oldest Spain. Formerly, he was the night watchman of a street who walked up and down the block with a lantern that he poked into the faces of passers-by and a pike that he poked on the pavement, calling out the hours with a "By the grace of our Lord's Blessed Mother, all's well!" We informed Señor Sereno that we were exhausted and had engaged rooms in this hotel. He said that positively nothing could be done about it. Furthermore, he added, there were no rooms to be had in the whole of Morelia. The available lodgings had been occupied to overflowing since early in the evening, mostly by holiday seekers from Mexico City. Probably we might find something at Pátzcuaro, some six hours beyond. He moved on, blowing his pipe and trying doors.

We refused to believe the sereno and drove all over the town, banging loudly at any door that resembled that of an inn. In one or two instances we roused sleepy porters, who just shook their heads and slammed the doors in our faces. We were about to draw up along the curb of the Garden of the Martyrs as the only fit place for us, when we espied the flare of a smoky torch beneath the dark cavern of the portales. To our immeasurable delight, we found at least a half dozen al fresco eating stands of a kind peculiar to Mexico. Along about midnight these food purveyors stole in with their portable restaurants, and remained there until the break of day. We had to step over the forms of sleeping Indians, the women huddled up against columns; their rebozos wound around them, the men sprawled full length on the concrete pavement partially covered by their serapes, while in every other corner a dog lay stretched out. The hosts were all old Indian men or women. Some of them had chairs and tables and all had charcoal braziers of a type introduced into Spain by the Moors a thousand years ago. The chicken, tortillas and boiled corn tasted even more delicious than they smelled. Strange nightbirds of humans drifted in and out of the darkness and had a bite of this or that. The dogs rose and sniffed and snarled around us waiting for the bones which we threw among them. A spot of tequila was all that was needed to take away the chill and the gloom and we headed toward the outskirts of the town where there was a hospitable garage, they told us.

Alas, the rest of that night was a memorable nightmare. The garage consisted of a yard hedged on three sides by sheds filled with junked cars, groaning cattle, manure beds and puddles. We poked the nose of our car partially under a shed and stirred up



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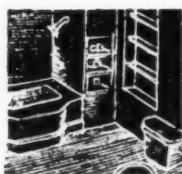
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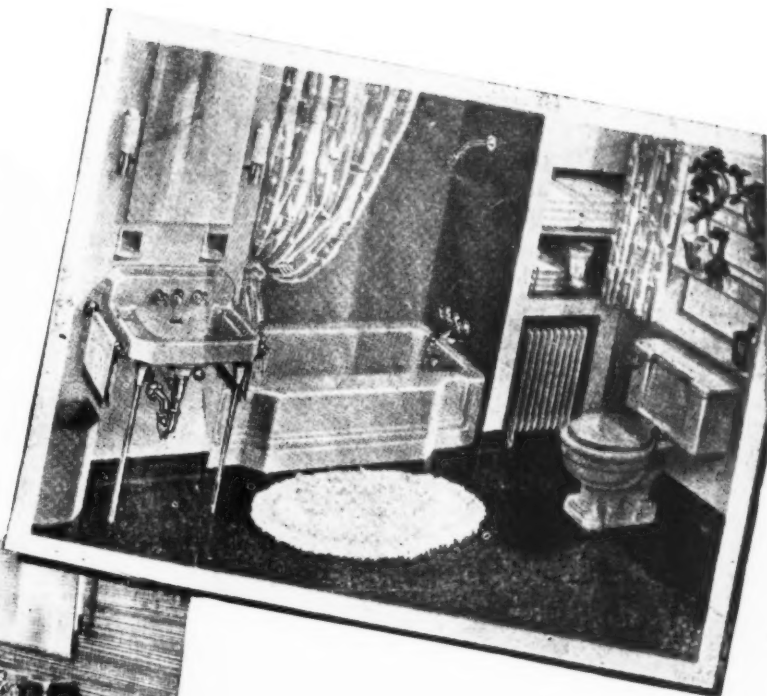


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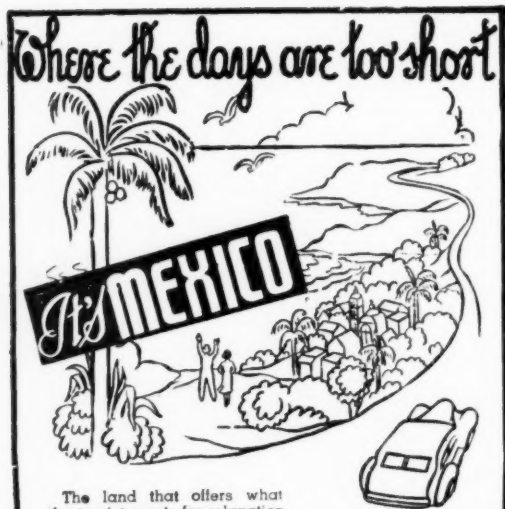
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clouds of mosquitoes that viciously resented our intrusion, and an army of fleas—for which Morelia is famous—easily eluding our counter-attacks. We shun ourselves up in the stuffy car in vain. Cold pierced our marrow and cramped our bones, but our skin remained sensitive to the sting of insects, the softest padding seemed to bore holes through our ears and head as we vainly sought to rest them here and there, the cows moaned and moaned, the odors, became violent in their assaults, until at the break of day we all declared ourselves licked as we crawled out of the car trying to take the excruciating cramps out of our bodies.

It was All Saints' Day. The sun was rising, the church bells were ringing. Hundreds of undersized Indians, the women for the most part barefoot, the men wearing sandals, were coming into town from the mountains, most of them paying a visit to the church on their way to the market. We were halted and narrowly averted an accident when a donkey foal with a ludicrously thick coat ran suddenly away from its mother, the whole train of charcoal-loaded animals following, their Indian drivers yelling and pushing in vain. Our Hotel Grande was open and smilingly received us and provided a bountiful breakfast, the chief dish being frijoles, of which young Pancho ate two dishes in preference to oatmeal. We dropped in at the cathedral for a few moments and then went on our way over the hills and far away, actually rejoicing.



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**Out of Touch With Things . . .**

Continued from page 12

down and watch the waves come in down the beach, and enjoy himself until he died. Then they would put candles by his head and feet and, since there was no priest, an old woman would get up and wail out the chants and all the family would join in. Then they would take him out beyond town a little way and bury him. They would put a little wooden cross trimmed with colored paper at his head with flowers alongside and then they would go away. After a while the flowers would wilt and the paper on the cross would bleach white with the sun and come away and then the little cross would fall to pieces and disappear. And that as that. But the sun was still shining as beautifully as ever and it was all right.

These people were very fine. They were always enjoying themselves and never bothering about anything, except women and fights. They were always laughing over one thing or another and everybody slept well and nobody was nervous. When a stranger came to town they gave him all the food he could eat and for nothing. This was natural, since there was no road to the town and few strangers came that way.

I know how the people in that town would be thought of by other people. One man would say, "Just look at these dumb bastards. How could anyone stand to live in such a hole, all dirty and with nothing to do? Why don't they go crazy? What in hell do they think of? How do they get along without cold beer? For Christ's sake, haven't they got any ambition? Why don't they make some improvements around here?"

Another man would say, "These poor men and women are wasting their life, what with no steady religion and no organized inner life. They need a church and a Sunday School. And the little children should be made to wear clothes."

Another man would say, "How romantic and artistic these people are! They have consciously thought this life out for themselves; they have rejected the bad, and taken the good of life; therefore, everything they do is right and everything we do is wrong; they are primitives and we are degenerates."

Another man would say, "These people have never been given an opportunity. They have never had a chance to rise. No-one is helping them and it is not their fault that they are as they are. Someone should give them schools and hospitals and money and business to start them off, and then they would be just like everybody else." Or another man would say, "This group is the result of centuries of neglect and exploitation by the reactionary, bourgeois merchant group that maintains pressure to keep them chained to the capitalist cart. These poor people must be made class-conscious and indoctrinated with the Party's concepts."

It is hard to decide on what is good for people. There is no doubt about it; these fishermen were

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not very well off. But still they were better off than any other people that I had ever seen. I have to laugh every time I think of how well off they were, all by themselves down the beach.

### We the Poor (and You Only You) . . .

Continued from page 14

plumbing, it is usually cluttered with odds and ends though the rest of the house is immaculate. A favorite economy among the poorer folk is toilet paper. Newspaper will not go down the drain, so it goes into an overflowing box in the corner. But somebody always tries to put it down the drain, so there is a plumber's bill that far outweighs the economy of toilet paper.

This trial can be reduced to a minimum by using the bathhouses, which are everywhere and are usually a pleasure. Only a handful of Turkish baths cost more than two pesos, and some cost as little as 80 centavos. Showers cost less. The rubber gets from one to two pesos for his massage. The price often includes use of a swimming pool. The conversation is free.

After I was settled, I found a Chinese restaurant that served a dinner for 3 pesos so plentiful that in the evening all I wanted was a bowl of soup. I was a bit dizzy by that time anyhow from sampling the regional sweets on top of the malted-and-ice-cream debauch in McAllen. Later I found other restaurants for 2 pesos and less. That night I passed up the two-peso seats in a movie house to sit in the 80-centavo gallery. These galleries usually have only huge cement steps like a stadium. The habitués spend what they save on sweets and oranges, letting the wrappers and peels fall where they may.

Next day, when I walked into the steam room of a bath-house, I faced the delighted shouts of a friend I had known in Mexico City on a pre-war trip. That took care of my next two nights. These people get together in the evenings on the street or in a home and talk

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and laugh without letup for hours. Somebody with a guitar may start off with "Tu" at any moment. The streets teem with a life that we know only in a few foreign sections of our cities and in some villages on Saturday night. There is often drinking but by no means always. Anyone who has lived in Mexico for any time will meet friends wherever he goes, for they take advantage of the cheap transportation and the hospitality of their numerous and widely scattered friends and relatives. In Aguascalientes and León I also ran into friends.

I had anticipated spending my lonesome evenings catching up on movies, but I saw only two on the trip. "Nosotros los Pobres" (We the Poor) and "Ustedes los Ricos" (You the Rich) were playing every place from Reynosa to Mexico City. "We the Poor," produced more than a year ago, was so successful it was immediately followed by the sequel, and now the bracketed bill is playing return engagements. I considered going, but when I saw the still of a grieving mother in a circle of sirupily sympathetic children, I turned back to the street.

In Aguascalientes I had a front room for four pesos, in León a room with balcony for three, in Celaya an inside room for five; but in Irapuato I paid eight for good meals and a room with a balcony overlooking the plaza, and shared a bathroom with orchid fixtures with the manager. Nothing much worked, but there it was.

In León I was attracted by the cleanliness of a little side-street restaurant called the "California" and a sign saying "Comida Corrida 1.30 pesos." That 15-cent dinner was well-cooked and filling. The owner had come down from San Antonio with his two trucks to play great lord among his wife's relatives for a couple of years. He had to feed six children, so thought he might as well run a restaurant. In León, too, I met Pepe, who loved to reminisce about his two years in the States. 12 hours a day, 365 days a year, he keeps open his outlet in the Aldama market for the great straw sombreros of nearby San Francisco. He had ten dimpled children and said their mother could dance a fandango with any of the girls, which turned out to be true. I sat many hours with him watching the busy street, which was like a movie framed in the square of the front of his shop. Glass jars of orange—and limeade loomed on a counter in front of me, where somebody came every few minutes to fill a bottle already partly filled with pure alcohol. A cheap and efficient refreshment.

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Most Mexican towns have that pattern of plaza, shops, and markets, which varies endlessly. Sometimes it can be exhausted in minutes, sometimes in days. A good pedestrian can keep on walking and finding something strange in regional sweets or foods, or open doors where somebody is making something he may never see anywhere else in Mexico. Everybody responds to a friendly curiosity.

The typical market closes between two and seven, but I found the Santiago market in León a center of revelry and music at 8:30. Everybody was eating antojitos, the Mexican Indian dishes, or drinking sodas. At the Aldama market the main floor was barred but people were eating in the fondas on the balcony, of which twelve by actual count had juke boxes. When all of them were lit up and blaring at once, the effect was tonic on both eye and ear.

Nearly every night on my trip I ate antojitos in the markets or streets. It was difficult to eat a peso's worth. Pozole, a soup of hominy and pork, was 20 centavos and tamales, tacos, gorditas, tostados, and atole, the foods with a corn base, averaged 10 centavos. I usually breakfasted on fruits. Mameys, that curious fruit with a nut-like husk and red or orange meat, and the black sapote, which looks like a green tomato stuffed with axle grease, sold for from 10 to 50 centavos. Pyramids of 2 to 5 guavas, bananas, or oranges sold for 20 centavos.

León had a fiesta, the blessing of the inditos. It is difficult to write anything about Mexico without mentioned these brown, big-eyed children who behave so much better than their self-styled betters. From 11 a.m. until dusk they came to the church of Guadalupe wearing their fiesta costumes and carrying trays of colorful foods. Five one-minute photographers in the churchyard did a production-line business. All day, Indians in what they imagined to be Aztec costume, danced in front of the church. At dusk, girls in their teens, beguiled by the pretty custom, began coming in freshly ironed costumes and carrying trays of fruit, making the pilgrimage in their tiny bare feet. I'm sure the priests might be pardoned if they put a little extraunction into their twilight benisons.

Celaya had two fiestas. One was a great mass and procession followed by fireworks. The other had six platforms in the church yard where Indians performed dances and folk plays. Tables lined the sidewalks for blocks selling "antojitos" and sweets.

I stepped from my bus in Mexico City to face a poster advertising "We the Poor" and a jukebox playing "Tu Solo Tu," having spent around 100 pesos for transportation and slightly more than 200 for other



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My most memorable good times in Mexico have nearly all come when I had the least money. The poor are afflicted with about everything you could mention except despair, but their "antojitos" are so good they sometimes dull my sympathy. I want to see the people lifted out of their centuries-old morass of poverty and superstition by education and improved production, but I hope that in the process they retain as much as possible of their simplicity, camaraderie, "antojitos," love of song, and easy capacity for enjoyment.

### Un Poco de Todo . . .

Continued from page 31

Latin America in American schools, the report says, although they are easily available at trifling cost.

To correct these conditions, the report recommends that schools pay far more attention to Latin America than they do now. It urges that in each school study-discussion groups of teachers under competent leaders be organized to explore inter-American education. It proposes further that the Board of Education in collaboration with the United States Department of State should send more teachers to observe and participate in educational and local work in Latin America.

Community interest would be stimulated by means of an expanded course of study on Latin-American in schools and by the establishment of Latin-American courses for adults in evening schools and community centers.



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